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PLUTARCH

Rome in Crisis

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PLUTARCH

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ROME IN CRISIS

PLUTARCH (c. 50–c. 120 CE) was a writer and thinker born into a wealthy, established family of Chaeronea in central Greece. He received the best possible education in rhetoric and philosophy, and travelled to Asia Minor and Egypt. Later, a series of visits to Rome and Italy contributed to his fame, and it was said that he had received official recognition by the emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Plutarch rendered conscientious service to his province and city (where he continued to live), as well as holding a priesthood at nearby Delphi. His voluminous surviving writings are broadly divided into the ‘moral’ works and the Lives of outstanding Greek and Roman leaders. The former (*Moralia*) are a mixture of rhetorical and antiquarian pieces, together with technical and moral philosophy (sometimes in dialogue form). The Lives have been influential from the Renaissance onwards.

IAN SCOTT-KILVERT was Director of English Literature at the British Council and Editor of *Writers and Their Works*. For Penguin Classics, he translated Plutarch’s *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, *Makers of Rome* and *The Age of Alexander*, and Cassius Dio’s *The Roman History*. He died in 1989.

CHRISTOPHER PELLING is Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University. He has published a commentary on Plutarch’s *Life of Antony* (Cambridge University Press, 1988) and a commentary on *Plutarch’s Life of Caesar* will be published shortly in the Clarendon Ancient History series. His other books include *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (Routledge, 2000). Most of his articles on Plutarch were collected in his *Plutarch and History* (Classical Press of Wales and Duckworth, 2002).

Rome in Crisis
Nine Lives by Plutarch

Tiberius Gracchus • Gaius Gracchus
Sertorius • Lucullus
Younger Cato • Brutus • Antony
Galba • Otho

Translated by IAN SCOTT-KILVERT
and CHRISTOPHER PELLING

Introduction and Notes by
CHRISTOPHER PELLING

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Notes

Penguin Plutarch

The first Penguin translation of Plutarch appeared in 1958, with Rex Warner's version of six Roman Lives appearing as *Fall of the Roman Republic*. Other volumes followed steadily, three of them by Ian Scott-Kilvert (*The Rise and Fall of Athens* in 1960, *Makers of Rome* in 1965 and *The Age of Alexander* in 1973), and then Richard Talbert's *Plutarch on Sparta* in 1988. Several of the moral essays were also translated by Robin Waterfield in 1992. Now only fourteen of the forty-eight Lives remain. These remaining Lives will now be included in the new edition, along with revised versions of those already published. The present volume includes four of those fourteen previously unpublished Lives.

This is also an opportunity to divide up the Lives in a different way, although it is not straightforward to decide what that different way should be. Nearly all Plutarch's surviving biographies were written in pairs as Parallel Lives: thus a 'book' for Plutarch was not just *Theseus* or *Caesar* but *Theseus* and *Romulus* or *Alexander* and *Caesar*. Most, but not all, of those pairs have a brief epilogue at the end of the second Life comparing the two heroes, just as many have a prologue before the first Life giving some initial grounds for the comparison. Not much attention was paid to this comparative technique at the time when the Penguin series started to appear, and it seemed natural then to separate each Life from its pair and organize the volumes by period and city. The comparative epilogues were not included in the translations at all.

That now looks very unsatisfactory. The comparative technique has come to be seen as basic to Plutarch's strategy, underlying not only those brief epilogues but also the entire pairings. (It is true, though, that in the last few years scholars have become increasingly alert to the way that *all* the Lives, not just the pairs, are crafted to complement one another.) It is very tempting to keep the pairings in this new series in a way that would respect Plutarch's own authorial intentions.

After some agonizing, we have decided nevertheless to keep to something like the original strategy of the series, though with some refinement. The reason is a practical one. Many, perhaps most, readers

of Plutarch will be reading him to see what he has to say about a particular period, and will wish to compare his treatment of the major players to see how the different parts of his historical jigsaw fit together. If one kept the pairings, that would inevitably mean buying several different volumes of the series; and if, say, one organized those volumes by the Greek partner (so that, for instance, *Pericles–Fabius*, *Nicias–Crassus* and *Coriolanus–Alcibiades* made one volume), anyone primarily interested in the Roman Lives of the late Republic would probably need to buy the whole set. That is no way to guarantee these finely crafted works of art the wide reading that they deserve. Keeping the organization by period also allows some other works of Plutarch to be included along with the Lives themselves, for instance the fascinating essay *On the Malice of Herodotus* with the Lives of Themistocles and Aristides and (as before) several Spartan essays with the Spartan Lives.

Of course the comparative epilogues must now be included, and they will be translated and printed along with the second Life of each pair, just as the prologues are conventionally printed before the first Life. Each volume will now also usually include more extended introductions to each Life, which will draw attention to the importance of the comparison as well as other features of Plutarch's technique. This is a compromise, and an uncomfortable one; but it still seems the better way.

The volumes will, however, sort the Lives into more logical groups. The early Roman figures will now be grouped together in a single volume entitled *The Rise of Rome*; the Life of Agesilaus will migrate from the *The Age of Alexander* to join the rest of the Spartan Lives, and the Life of Artaxerxes will join the *The Age of Alexander* collection; the rest of the new translations of Roman Lives will now join those of the Gracchi, Brutus and Antony in this new *Rome in Crisis* volume. The introductions and notes will be revised where necessary. In due course we hope to include the Moral Essays in the project as well.

In a recent bibliometric study (*Ancient Society* 28 (1997), 265–89) Walter Scheidel observed that the proportion of scholarly articles devoted to most classical authors had remained more or less constant since the 1920s. The one author to stand out for an exceptional rise was Plutarch. That professional pattern has been matched by a similar surge in the interest in Plutarch shown by the general reading public. The Penguin translations have played a large part in fostering that interest, and this new, more comprehensive project will surely play a similar role in the future.

Christopher Pelling
2004, 2010

Preface to the Revised Edition

The translations of *Tiberius Gracchus*, *Gaius Gracchus*, *Sertorius*, *Brutus* and *Antony* are revised versions of those in Ian Scott-Kilvert's 1965 Penguin volume *Makers of Rome*. The translations of *Lucullus*, *Younger Cato*, *Galba* and *Otho* and of the various *Comparisons* are by me, and the introductions and notes are also mine.

Scholars sometimes refer to the chapters in the *Comparisons* with a separate numeration (as *Comparison of Dion and Brutus* 1, abbreviated in *this* volume as *Comp. Dion–Brut.* 1), sometimes with a continuation of the numeration of the second Life (as *Brutus* 54), sometimes with a combination of the two (as *Brutus* 54(1)). I have included both numerations, with one in brackets. There is a similar double numeration in the case of *Tiberius Gracchus* and *Gaius Gracchus*, with the Lives sometimes numbered as two works and sometimes as one continuous narrative: here too I have made use of brackets to include both sets of numbers.

I am grateful to Rhiannon Ash for reading and commenting on the introduction to *Galba and Otho*, to Jeff Tatum for the opportunity to try out some of the material on the *Gracchi* in Florida State University in 2006 and to Monica Schmoller for her meticulous copy-editing.

Christopher Pelling
2010

Abbreviations

SHORT TITLES

- ANRW: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (1972–)
CAH2: *Cambridge Ancient History* (2nd edn, 1961–)
CQ: *Classical Quarterly*
Crawford, RRC: M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (1974)
Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*: T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (1999)
FGrH: F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–)
G&R: *Greece & Rome*
G–C: A. H. C. Greenidge and A. M. Clay, *Sources for Roman History 133–70 BC* (2nd edn, rev. E. W. Gray, 1986)
HRR: H. Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta* i–ii (1906, 1914)
Jones, P&R: C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (1971)
JRS: *Journal of Roman Studies*
Konrad: C. F. Konrad, *Plutarch: Sertorius: A Historical Commentary* (1994)
Lintott, *Constitution*: A. W. Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (1999)
MRR: T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* i–iii (1956–86)
OCD3: *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (3rd edn, rev. 2004)
ORF: H. Malcovati, *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta* (4th edn, 1967)
Pelling, P&H: C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Essays* (2002)
PRR: C. Brennan, *The Praetorship in the Roman Republic* i–ii (2000)
Shackleton Bailey: D. R. Shackleton Bailey
 Cicero's Letters to Atticus i–vi (1965–7)
 Cicero Epistulae ad Familiares i–ii (1977)
 Cicero Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem et M. Brutum (1980)

ABBREVIATIONS OF CLASSICAL AUTHORS AND TITLES

App.
Mith.
B Afr.
Caes.
BC
BG
Cic.
Ad Brut.
Ad Fam.
Amic.
Att.
Brut.
Cat.
De Or.
Div.
Fin.
Luc.
Off.
Phil.
Sest.
Diod.
Nic. Dam.

Plut.
Aem.
Alc.
Alex.
Ant.
Arat.
Brut.
C. Gracch.
Caes.
Cato

Cic.
Cim.
Cleom.
Cor.
Crass.
Dem.
Demetr.
Eum.
Flam.
Galb.

Appian
Mithridatica
Bellum Africum
Caesar
Bellum Civile
Bellum Gallicum
Cicero
Epistulae ad Brutum
Epistulae ad Familiares
De Amicitia
Epistulae ad Atticum
Brutus
In Catilinam
De Oratore
De Divinatione
De Finibus
Lucullus
De Officiis
Orationes Philippicae
Pro Sestio
Diodorus Siculus
Nicolaus of Damascus,
Life of Augustus
Plutarch
Aemilius Paullus
Alcibiades
Alexander
Antony
Aratus
Brutus
Gaius Gracchus
Caesar
Younger Cato (except where stated as
Elder Cato)
Cicero
Cimon
Cleomenes
Coriolanus
Crassus
Demosthenes
Demetrius
Eumenes
Flaminius
Galba

<i>Luc.</i>	<i>Lucullus</i>
<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Marius</i>
<i>Phoc.</i>	<i>Phocion</i>
<i>Pomp.</i>	<i>Pompey</i>
<i>Popl.</i>	<i>Poplicola</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romulus</i>
<i>Sert.</i>	<i>Sertorius</i>
<i>Sull.</i>	<i>Sulla</i>
<i>Them.</i>	<i>Themistocles</i>
<i>Ti. Gracch.</i>	<i>Tiberius Gracchus</i>
Sall.	Sallust
<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Bellum Catilinae</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
<i>Jug.</i>	<i>Bellum Iugurthinum</i>
Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Divus Augustus</i>
<i>Galb.</i>	<i>Galba</i>
<i>Iul.</i>	<i>Divus Iulius</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	<i>Vitellius</i>
Tac.	Tacitus
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>Agricola</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annals</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogues</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
Vell.	Velleius Paterculus
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus
Xen.	Xenophon
<i>Anab.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>

General Introduction

I. *Plutarch and the Roman Empire*

Plutarch wrote the Lives in this volume around 100 CE: perhaps ten years or so earlier in the case of *Galba* and *Otho*, perhaps something up to twenty-five years after that date in the case of the others.¹ He was writing them in the small town of Chaeronea in Boeotia, not too far from Delphi in central Greece; and Greece was by now the province of Achaea, a peaceable part of the Roman empire. All those places – if we move outwards, Chaeronea, Boeotia, Delphi, Greece, Rome – were important to Plutarch the person, part of his ‘identity’; and all are important to his writing too.

Chaeronea first. These Lives deal with great events, massive internal political disruptions in the case of the Gracchi, external wars that stretch far west with Sertorius and far east with Lucullus, violent political dissent which led to civil war with Cato and Brutus, more civil war and the founding of the principate with the war of Octavian and Antony, then further civil wars and even more violent changes of regime with Galba and Otho. That might seem very remote from a Boeotian backwater – ‘a small town, and my love of the place makes me try to stop it becoming even smaller’ (*Dem.* 2). But there were times when those great world events came very close, too close for comfort. One was during the Actium campaign of 31 BCE:

My great grandfather Nicarchus used to relate how all the citizens of our native town of Chaeronea were forced to carry on their shoulders a certain quantity of wheat down to the sea at Anticyra, and how they were urged on by the whip. They had already carried down one consignment in this fashion, a second had been measured out ready for transport, and then the news arrived of Antony’s defeat. That was what saved the city, for all his agents and soldiers immediately fled, and the inhabitants were left to share out the wheat among themselves.

(*Ant.* 68)

By now that was well over a century in the past; but one can well understand that such memories were not easily erased.

This was a period where Greeks took great pride in their past, and small-town pride could be particularly fierce. Inscriptions throughout

the eastern Mediterranean world celebrate local historians for ensuring that their cities' role in history should not be forgotten,² and Plutarch too makes sure that Chaeronea is given appropriate recognition: that is especially true of the great battles of Chaeronea in 338 and 86 BCE (*Dem.* 19–21 and *Alex.* 9, referring to an old tree, 'Alexander's oak', still to be seen there; *Sull.* 16–20 and *On the Fortune of the Romans* 318d).³ Doing the right thing by one's town could also impose a different sort of moral obligation. In the proem to *Cimon and Lucullus* Plutarch explains that Chaeronea owes a debt of gratitude to the Roman general, who intervened on the town's behalf when it was in danger because of an overbearing Roman garrison, and again when matters came to a trial before the governor of Macedonia (Intro. *Luc.*).⁴ In his *Lucullus* Plutarch does what he can to show that gratitude nearly two hundred years later. That tells a tale not merely about the importance of the past and the length of community memory but also about the threat from which the town was saved. Lucullus's intervention was a bright interval; the more regular pattern of fear and oppression is also clear. No wonder Plutarch shows such interest in his subjects' records as provincial administrators, and – as with Lucullus, but in more passing ways – makes sure that praise is given when it is deserved.⁵ Rather too often, it was not.

Chaeronea occupied Plutarch's attention in everyday life as well. He travelled widely, including trips to Rome and Italy and (relevant to *Antony*) to Alexandria; his friends included Roman grandees, as we will see. But he was not too grand to take on mundane local responsibilities. In *Advice on Public Life* he advises his young addressee (Menemachus of Sardis) not to go looking for public office, but to accept it when it came his way (813c–d, cf. *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* 793c–d, 794b). He evidently did the same himself, taking on jobs which might involve clearing ditches and diverting streams.

Visitors laugh at me when they see me occupied, as I often am, with public duties like that; but I just recall the story they tell about Antisthenes. Someone expressed surprise when he was carrying a pickled fish himself through the market-place: 'well, it's for myself,' he said. I, on the other hand, say something different to people who take me to task for overseeing some tile-measuring or cement-mixing or stone-carrying: 'it's not for me that I'm building this,' I say, 'it's for my country.'

(*Advice on Public Life* 811b–c)

And much of the advice he gives in that essay is clearly aimed at local politics, advice for instance on how the elite can impress the ordinary people by not always saying the same thing, sometimes staging prearranged arguments and sometimes genuinely disagreeing in

public: this means that, when really important things are at stake, a united stance from the leading citizens is more likely to carry the day (813a–c).⁶ Not, perhaps, wholly comfortable to modern tastes – but still an indication of some genuine politics, some need for tactics and manoeuvre, some real decisions and compromises to be made and leadership to be given. When we come to gauge the lessons that Plutarch's readers can glean, we should not forget that local dimension. One did not need to live in an imperial city to find elements of the Roman, Athenian or Spartan past that might still strike a chord.

Boeotia mattered to Plutarch too. The Boeotian national hero, Epaminondas, was joined with Scipio (probably Scipio Aemilianus)⁷ as the flagship opening pair of the *Parallel Lives* – sadly, that pair has not survived – and his fellow-hero Pelopidas was also among the earliest figures to be treated. (So was Lucullus: Intro. *Luc.*)⁸ In his essay *On Herodotus's Malice* Plutarch is indignant at what he sees as the unfair treatment Herodotus meted out to the people of Boeotia for their behaviour during Xerxes' invasion of 480: 'It is clear – is it not? – that Herodotus has some private grudge and spite against the Thebans' (865b). That, too, is something that a loyal local man would want to put right, with a helping of the moral generosity which, as we will see, Plutarch felt appropriate for treating the past.

Delphi, a little further away, formed a particularly important part of Plutarch's life. The oracle was about to undergo a revival of fortunes, partly thanks to an increasing interest on the part of Romans, including the emperors themselves. Plutarch was a priest at Delphi and served the shrine for 'many Pythiads' (792f): his vast knowledge of Delphic antiquities is shown in his essays *On the Pythia's Prophecies*, *On the Delphic E* and *On the Decline of Oracles*. As it happens, the specific interest in Delphian matters does not emerge in the *Lives* in this volume (though Antony's promise to restore the temple is given space: *Ant.* 23); but it is still symptomatic of the way that Plutarch's intellectual and everyday concerns could mesh together, and how the Greek past and institutions, religious as well as political, could still in the present fascinate others as well as Plutarch – Romans included.

Or at least some Romans. It is difficult to generalize about the cultural relationship of the Greek and Roman worlds at this time. As the Roman elite grew more international, men from the Greek world were drawn in along with others. Two friends of Plutarch, C. Iulius Eurycles Herculanius of Sparta (a descendant of the Eurycles of *Ant.* 67) and King Philopappus of Commagene, were among the first senators from the Greek East, and within a generation after Plutarch's death Arrian from Bithynia would reach the suffect consulship (130 CE) and Herodes Atticus from Athens would hold the even more prized

position of *consul ordinarius* (148 CE) – that is, the consul who held office on 1 January and gave his name to the year. And there were certainly some Romans who understood Greek and the Greek world well. There was the Epicurean Maximus, sent by Trajan to regulate the Greek cities; there were Vestricius Spurinna and Arrius Antoninus, who composed Greek verses.⁹ There was Suetonius, an accomplished Hellenist. But no doubt there was another side to this too, and the most accomplished Roman writers of the day were less immersed in and influenced by Greek writers than their counterparts in the Ciceronian age. Nor was Juvenal generous to the Greeks resident in Rome: ‘Citizens! I just can’t bear this city that’s so Greek,’ his rant begins¹⁰ – doubtless posturing, but it was a possible posture to adopt.

Still, it is important that there were civilized Philhellenes with whom Plutarch could feel at home. Some of them we can name. One is L. Mestrius Florus, with whom Plutarch visited the battlefield of Bedriacum (*Otho* 14, cf. 18): he was consul under Vespasian, and it was apparently to him that Plutarch owed his Roman citizenship (Intro. *Galb.*–*Otho*). Another was Q. Sosius Senecio, a military man and twice consul (99 and 107 CE), and the dedicatee of Plutarch’s two most ambitious works, the *Parallel Lives* and *Table Talk*, as well as the essay *On Progress in Virtue*. There were other powerful Romans too among his acquaintance.¹¹ *Table Talk* depicts a world where Plutarch’s dinner-guests – usually in Chaeronea, but occasionally elsewhere – include such Romans along with local Greeks, doctors and farmers and Plutarch’s own family. And those Romans are thoroughly at home in matters Greek. When Sosius speaks himself, he sprinkles Greek quotations including a lengthy one from Theophrastus’s *On Music*, ‘which I was just reading recently’; on other occasions Mestrius Florus has just read Aristotle’s *Scientific Problems*, as a copy has recently reached Thermopylae, and is putting learned and curious questions to his intellectual friends; and Lucius Sulla (a Carthaginian, but clearly a very Romanized one, and that too is a pointer to this international society) can recall Gorgias’s remark when he had been dive-bombed by a swallow – ‘that’s not nice, Philomela!’¹²

Such men should be remembered as we read the *Lives*. Sosius Senecio is a suggestive choice as dedicatee, with his blend of Roman achievement and respect for Greece: he can himself be a symbol of the interplay of different worlds which we see in the *Parallel Lives* (and in *Table Talk* as well). Not that he would be the typical reader. Quite often Plutarch explains Roman institutions in a way that suggests a predominantly Greek audience, and one that is not specially well informed about Roman ways;¹³ he rarely feels the need to explain Greek practices in the same way. But Greek readers could still feel intrigued by that dedication to Sosius, and flattered to think that even

the most powerful of Romans could be sympathetic enough to be their fellow-reader. It was a reassurance that, at least in some ways and at some levels, this was a world which Greeks and Romans shared.

What purpose, then, should we assume for the Lives, particularly the Parallel Lives with their programme of looking at great Greeks and Romans comparatively? Fifty years ago there was a tendency to assume some diplomatic purpose, bringing the Greek and Roman worlds closer together, encouraging Romans to take Greece and the Greek past seriously and Greeks not to despise the philistine Romans.¹⁴ In 1971 Christopher Jones argued strongly against this, emphasizing in particular the ways in which the two worlds were already working closely together.¹⁵ Doubtless the harmony was not always complete – but it probably is right to think that most of Plutarch's readers would need little encouragement to think harmoniously, and those Romans who were less inclined to mutual respect would be unlikely to find their way to the Lives. It may still make sense to see the Lives as providing crystallizing examples that would reinforce a set of attitudes which most of his readers would already possess. In particular, the strategy of comparing Greeks and Romans is itself making an eloquent statement that they *were* comparable, men whose virtues and attainments could be evaluated on the same scale, representatives of two cultures and histories that were therefore comparable too. That is all the more so because the concluding Comparisons so rarely come down squarely on one side or the other (cf. Intros. *Sert.* and *Luc.*). That burgeoning Greek pride in their own past could be strengthened by those assumptions, which are the more effective for being intimated rather than argued (Josephus's *Against Apion* is an indication of how off-putting a more strident rhetoric in defence of one's nation's past can be). And the implied respect for the Roman counterparts may also carry a message for the more hot-headed – even if they were in a minority – among Plutarch's readers in the Greek world.

For Romans needed to be treated carefully. *Table Talk* may provide a paradigm of how Greek culture and Roman power can speak together in a civilized way; but the awareness of that Roman power is never far beneath the surface, even when it takes the form of one Roman teasing another about the amount of wealth he did or did not extract from governing Greece.¹⁶ In *Advice on Public Life* the point is sharper:

As you enter on any office you should not merely recall the considerations of which Pericles would always remind himself when he took up his cloak: 'Pay attention, Pericles! You are ruling free men, you are ruling Greeks, Athenian citizens.' You must also say this to yourself, 'You are both ruler and ruled: the city is subject to proconsuls, the agents of Caesar.'

And an essential part of the advice given in that essay concerns the need for the cities to behave themselves with good sense and restraint, and above all to give Rome no excuse to intervene.

That affects the sort of morals that a judicious reader should extract from those glorious tales of the past (and we shall see in the next section that Plutarch is very keen on such morals). Pride, self-respect, these are fine: but one must be careful and discriminating.

We laugh at small children when they try to pull on their fathers' boots and wear their crowns; but what of the leaders in the cities, when they stupidly stir up the ordinary people and encourage them to imitate their ancestors' achievements and spirit and exploits, even though those are all quite out of keeping with present circumstances? Their behaviour may be laughable, but the consequences they suffer are no laughing matter. There are many other deeds of the Greeks of old which one may recount to mould the characters of the people of today and give them wisdom. At Athens, for instance, one might remind them not of their deeds of war, but of the nature of the amnesty decree under the Thirty; or of the way they fined Phrynichus for his tragedy about the fall of Miletus; or of how they wore crowns when Cassander refounded Thebes, but when they heard of the clubbing at Argos, with the Argives killing 1,500 of their fellow-citizens, they gave orders for a procession of purification around the whole assembly; or of the episode during the Harpalus affair, when they were searching the houses but passed by the one of the newly wedded bridegroom. Even now one can imitate these things, and make oneself like one's ancestors; as for Marathon and Eurymedon and Plataea, and all those examples which make the ordinary people swell up and fill them with shallow ostentation – we should leave them in the schools of the sophists.

(*Advice on Public Life* 814a–c)

Those are lessons that can serve in any political setting of any size, in Chaeronea or Athens or Sardis as much as in Rome itself. And, we might add, they are lessons that Plutarch could have hoped would be as relevant to future generations – any future generation – as to his own.

Perhaps one can still see some detachment in the way Plutarch talks about Rome and Romans. The *Advice on Public Life* suggests as much: the Romans are the ones who have taken some of the fun and the grandeur out of Greek public life. In the final section of this Introduction we shall also see some reserve in the way he discusses distinctive Roman values, in particular their militarism. And there is reserve elsewhere in the way he talks about those who, in this brave new Roman international world, hanker after the power of being a senator:

Here's some Chian, here's some Galatian or Bithynian who is not content if he has acquired some reputation or power among a section of his own community,

but bewails the fact that he is not yet wearing the patrician shoe; if he gets as far as wearing that, he's sad that he is not yet a Roman praetor; once praetor, that he is not consul; once consul, that he was proclaimed second rather than first.

(*On Peace of Mind* 470c–d)

True, Plutarch's point there is about restlessness, not about Rome. His preceding example took a prisoner who wants to be released, then to be free, then to be a citizen, then to be rich ... Plutarch was not deriding freedom or citizenship or wealth there, and he is not deriding a Roman career here. But it is still a telling example to come to mind, and we can sense Plutarch's ingrained sympathy with those content to stay at home; and it is more telling still that the possibilities of a Roman career do not figure in *Advice on Public Life* at all.¹⁷ There was a lot to be said for small-town Chaeronea.

All this makes it reasonable to see Plutarch as buttressing a Greek audience's pride in their past; but it is some way short of seeing that strengthening of self-respect as constituting a 'statement of resistance' to Roman power.¹⁸ Plutarch in fact insists on the benefits that Greece owes to Rome:

Consider the greatest goods which cities can enjoy, peace, freedom, prosperity, a thriving population, and concord. As for peace, the peoples have no need of politicians at the present time; every war, Greek and barbarian, has disappeared. The people have as much freedom as the ruling power allows, and perhaps more than this would be no good thing.

(*Advice on Public Life* 824c)

Wistfulness? Yes, perhaps, especially in that last comment on freedom. Within this volume, the *Brutus* and the *Younger Cato* in particular generate respect in the reader for the attachment of both men to freedom: one cannot deride people like that, nor what they stood for. Equally, and remarkably, the young Octavian is treated with a certain coolness (Intro. *Ant.*), even though he was the founder of the principate that brought those 'greatest goods' to Greece and ended those harrowing hardships of the civil war with which we began. It is the warm-hearted Antony, as damaging to himself as to others, and the glamorous Cleopatra with whom most readers feel more engagement as the queen's marvellous death draws near. But Plutarch also leaves no doubt that, on a longer view, Cato and Brutus were wrong:

Caesar's rule caused some considerable trouble for its opponents while it was being established, but once people had accepted it and been defeated it seemed no more than a name and a semblance, with no consequences that were cruel or tyrannical. Indeed, it seemed as if the circumstances were calling for monarchy, and Caesar was Heaven's own gift to Rome as the gentlest possible doctor.

Fate, indeed, was bringing everything around to monarchy, and to Octavian;¹⁹ and the days of liberty were gone (*Ant.* 19 and n. 113).

To carry off that balancing trick, leaving the reader sympathetic to what Cato and Brutus stood for but also alert to what reality required, is a considerable achievement on Plutarch's part; yet it is an achievement wholly in tune with his attitude to the political realities of his own day. Brutus and Cato could, in fact, have done with something of that capacity to discriminate realistic from unrealistic idealism that *Advice on Public Life* had commended.

II. *Plutarch and Biography*

The Lives included in this volume originally formed part of two separate series. *Galba* and *Otho* were two of the Lives of the Caesars from Augustus to Vitellius, probably written under Domitian and before 93 CE;²⁰ the other seven were part of the Parallel Lives, which seem to have been written over a long period after Domitian's death in 96. Plutarch was still working on this series, it seems, when he died some time in the 120s.²¹ For practical reasons set out in the section 'Penguin Plutarch', these Roman Lives are here separated from their Greek pairs and collected together, but the comparative aspect of Plutarch's project is important, as the introductions to the individual Lives will bring out. In approximate order of composition (and the approximation is in some cases speculative), the pairings of these Lives were *Cimon–Lucullus*, *Dion–Brutus*, *Phocion–Younger Cato*, *Demetrius–Antony*, *Sertorius–Eumenes* and *Agis–Cleomenes–Gracchi*.²²

It is in the Parallel Lives, especially the prefaces to each pair, that we find the clearest formulations of Plutarch's biographical programme.²³ Doubtless the Lives of the Caesars would have had a similar programmatic statement in the opening *Life of Augustus*, and probably there would have been similarities with the statements in the Parallel Lives, but we should not assume that they would have been exactly on the same lines (more on this in Intro. *Galb.–Otho*). In the Parallel Lives Plutarch's emphasis falls heavily on character. When writing about Alexander and Julius Caesar,

my preamble shall consist of nothing more than this one plea: if I do not record all their most celebrated achievements or describe any of them exhaustively, but merely summarize for the most part what they accomplished, I ask my readers not to quibble. For I am writing biography, not history, and the truth is that the most brilliant exploits often tell us nothing of the virtues and vices of the men who performed them, while on the other hand a chance remark or a

joke may reveal far more of a man's character than the mere feat of winning battles in which thousands fall, or of marshalling great armies, or laying siege to cities.

(*Alex.* 1)

So little things matter. That need not exclude big things completely: it is only 'often' that the passing remarks and jokes reveal more than a man's massive achievements or sufferings, not always. *Alexander* and *Caesar* themselves have a particularly large helping of such big things. But Plutarch feels no obligation to cover matters thoroughly if they do not reveal character, and for the full account of a battle he can 'refer the reader to those historians who have reported the war in detail' (*Fabius* 16). That, or something close to that, is true of the *Lives of the Caesars* as well:

A detailed narrative of what happened is appropriate for a pragmatic history, but I too should not omit anything of note in the doings and sufferings of the Caesars.

(*Galb.* 2)

There is not there the same emphasis on character (Intro. *Galb.*–*Otho*), but even in that earlier series we must certainly expect selectivity.

We duly find some 'little things' in Plutarch's narrative, the story for instance of the squabble and making-up of Munatius and Cato:

I have spent time on this because I think it just as telling as Cato's great public actions in giving the reader illumination and insight into the man's character.

(*Cato* 37)

That can justify too the inclusion of more out-of-the-way material, which he particularly favours when dealing with a period which his readers already know well – especially the Peloponnesian War, so familiar to his audience from Thucydides.²⁴ Even there, though, there can be no question of passing over the bigger things completely, for they 'throw so much light upon Nicias's character and disposition'.

Certain facts, however, which have eluded most writers altogether, or have been mentioned only haphazardly by others, or are recorded only in decrees or ancient votive inscriptions, I have tried to collect with care. In doing this my object is not to accumulate useless detail, but to hand down whatever may serve to make my subject's character and temperament better understood.

(*Nic.* 1)

So 'understanding' matters, 'insight' into character, but it is not understanding and insight for their own sake. There are lessons to be learned from these people, lessons about morality. Reading about the great figures of the past can make one better (*Pericles* 1–2) – indeed, it

has made Plutarch better himself:

When I first took up the writing of these Lives I did it for the sake of others, but now I find that I have grown fond of the task and continue it for my own sake. The reason is that it allows me to treat history as a mirror, with the help of which I can adorn my own life by imitating the virtues of the men whose actions I have described. It is as though I could talk with the subjects of my Lives and enjoy their company every day, since I receive each one in turn, welcome him as my guest, observe with admiration as Priam did of Achilles

What was his stature, what his qualities²⁵

and select from his career those events which are the most important and the most inspiring to record. As Sophocles has written,

What greater joy could you attain than this?²⁶

and what could do more to correct and improve our characters?

(*Aem.* 1)

Striking the balance between the need for accurate insight and the inspirational purpose can be delicate; one principle is to follow the practice of good portrait-painters, and not to conceal the less flattering features but not to overstress them (*Cim.* 2, cf. *Intro. Luc.*). But there are times when the less flattering elements come to dominate, and so, as a variation on the normal pattern of positive examples, it can be useful to have a few deterrent examples as well (*Demetr.* 1, *Intro. Ant.*). That, though, is still part of the same morally improving programme. Antony and Demetrius can show you what not to do, just as so often elsewhere the Lives can show models that are admirable, and – provided one shows the discrimination that we have already seen to be prudent (see above) – will inspire the well-disposed reader to go and do likewise.

The comparative technique also helps the reader to develop this morally improving insight. Plutarch phrases the principle most clearly not in the Lives but in his essay *On the Virtues of Women*:

And what is the best way of gauging the similarities and differences in the forms that female and male virtue can take? It is to place life next to life and achievements next to achievements, just as if they were consummate works of art, and examine whether they have the same character and shape ... [There will be similarities] but there are also certain variations, rather like different complexions, that virtues take because of ingrained nature, or come to assume according to a person's underlying habits and make-up and upbringing and lifestyle. Thus Achilles' bravery is different from that of Ajax, and Odysseus's wisdom from Nestor's; nor are Cato and Agesilaus men of justice in the same way, nor is Irene a loving wife in the same way as Alcestis, nor do Cornelia and

The comparative epilogues that conclude most²⁷ of the pairs carry through this sort of exercise in detail, normally concentrating, just as the *Virtues of Women* passage might lead us to expect, on the variations rather than the similarities. (The similarities are often emphasized in the proems, as we shall see in the Introductions to the individual Lives.) It also suits the moral programme that those epilogues are so explicitly evaluative, marking off the points on which each man is ahead of his counterpart. And some further internal comparisons – Antony with Caesar, for instance (*Ant.* 6), or the two Gracchi with one another (*Ti. Gracch.* 1–2), or Brutus with Cassius (Intro. *Brut.*) – can be illuminating in a similar way.

There is no equivocation, then, about Plutarch's moral purpose. Still, the nature of that moralism has become the focus for some debate, not least because the 'inspirational' quality of the Lives does often seem equivocal. With *Life after Life*, it is just so difficult to extract a clear moral. Should one imitate the Gracchi? It seems not, or at least not straightforwardly: their ambition is stigmatized (*Comp. Agis–Cleom.* 2), and there is a clear hint that they would not have acted as they did if wiser counsels had prevailed (*Ti. Gracch.* 7, 21, Intro. *Gracch.*). What of Sertorius? Getting away from it all, dreaming of the Isles of the Blessed (*Sert.* 8) – that is all very well, but it is not in keeping with Plutarch's own stern expectations of public service (see [Section I](#) above), and Sertorius really is too much of a renegade for comfort. And Lucullus? Plutarch does what he can to soften the negative impression left by his high-living final years (Intro. *Luc.*), but that part of the story is still uncomfortable. As for Cato and Brutus, we have already seen that their courses of action were not good models, at least (again) not straightforwardly: in the light of history, they were wrong. That 'not straightforwardly' is of course important, and one can admire the idealism of the Gracchi and Cato and Brutus without accepting the rightness of their policies, just as in the Lives of the Caesars one could admire Galba's insistence that he 'enlisted soldiers, he did not buy them' (*Galb.* 18) without denying that he was out of touch with reality. But it remains hard to work out what *were* the right policies for the Gracchi or Cato or Brutus. And where one can find clear moral lessons, they do not seem very challenging ones: not many readers will have needed telling that mass killing was wrong (*Ant.* 19–20), or that a wife might be admirable for sharing her husband's troubles (*Brut.* 13), or that Cato's concern for the citizens of Utica enhanced the glory of his end (*Cato* 58–72); or, if we go back to the Lives of the Caesars, that Tigellinus's end was shameful while Otho's

was glorious (*Otho* 2 and n. 6).

Different scholars make different suggestions, all broadly compatible with one another. Tim Duff has stressed the problematic nature of so much of this moralism, arguing that sometimes the interest can lie in complicating and challenging the moral assumptions that underlie a hero's decisions, and emphasizing the role of the reader in making up his or her own mind.²⁸ Philip Stadter points to the role of the historical imagination in all this, as the reader places himself or herself in the situation of the past and asks what *I* would do in such a crisis.²⁹ I have myself distinguished between 'protreptic' moralism, guiding a reader's conduct, and 'descriptive' moralism, pointing a truth about human nature and explaining how, say, Antony's vulnerability to Cleopatra may be a broader reflection of the frailties of the human condition.³⁰ What all these approaches share is an acknowledgement that a moral reading of the Lives is anything but the simple – perhaps even simple-minded – business that a casual reading of those programmatic statements might lead us to think. In looking at a character's actions the reader has to practise discrimination, and to weigh those actions against the possibilities that the historical context allowed, just as that potential politician (see [Section I](#) above) needs to be thoughtful and shrewd in knowing exactly what to infer from those distant examples from the past.

So the great figures of the past cannot be treated in isolation from their times and their background. That is partly a matter of understanding: one will not understand Coriolanus or Marcellus without understanding Roman militarism (*Cor.* 1, *Marc.* 1), just as one could not understand Lysander or Agis or Cleomenes without knowing of the Spartan traditions in which they were brought up. But it is also a matter of evaluation. One cannot judge Phocion without taking into account the way that he was managing 'the shipwreck of the city' (Intro. *Cato*), just as one cannot judge Brutus and Cato without an eye to that looming need for monarchy and one cannot judge the Gracchi without understanding the depth of the social problem they faced (Intro. *Gracch.*). So that distinction between history and biography, so neatly drawn in the *Alexander* proem, can never be an absolute one. This wider perspective invites us to see each Life not just as part of its pair, but as a part of the whole series. The Lives go together and complement one another in filling in that historical background which a reader of any one Life or pair will need – a more elaborate version, in fact, of the way that the earlier Lives of the Caesars combine to paint a picture of the principate (Intro. *Galb.*–*Otho*). It will not be coincidence that the rhythm of the final days of both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus has so much in common with the assassination of Julius Caesar and the uproar that followed (Intro. *Gracch.*): these are

the forces that are now being unleashed, and these, increasingly, are the violent political realities that all politicians will have to take into account, until finally they destroy even the man who exploited them so deftly and came so close to establishing the monarchy which, ultimately, would be the only answer.

III. *Sources and Methods*

Plutarch made his material his own. In this volume the introductions to each Life will discuss the ways that he structures the story, develops themes and images, builds his characters, and deepens and exploits the comparison. But he needed to get that material from somewhere, and he took the task very seriously. It was doubtless a bigger task with the Roman Lives than with at least some of the Greek: in particular, the figures of the classical Greek past (the Hellenistic Lives might be a little different) inhabited a world with which he had long been familiar. With Rome, more research – systematic, planned and critical reading – was necessary. It might include Latin sources, and he talks about this in the proem to *Demosthenes–Cicero*:

When I lived in Rome and other parts of Italy, my public duties and the number of pupils who came to me to study philosophy took up so much of my time that I had no leisure to practise speaking the Latin tongue, and so it was not until quite late in life that I began to study Roman literature. When I did I made a surprising discovery, which was nevertheless a genuine one. I found that it was not so much through words that I was enabled to grasp the meaning of things, but rather that it was my knowledge of things which helped me to understand the words that denoted them.

(*Dem.* 2)

He goes on to explain that he has therefore never developed a real feeling for Latin style, and hence he excuses himself from making a literary comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero. That is a revealing passage in several ways, not least for the way it again shows the conflicting pressures on Plutarch of public duty, philosophical teaching and literary culture: but he is explicit that he *did* read Latin, even if it was laborious, and even if we should not be surprised to find a few mistakes.³¹ That experience of finding a foreign language easiest when one already knows something of the subject-matter is not unfamiliar to many students and scholars today.

Most of the discussion of Plutarch's sources will be left for the introductions to each Life, but some preliminary points may be made here. We should distinguish not merely between the Lives of the Caesars and the Parallel Lives, but also several phases in the production of the Parallels. Towards the middle of that series he seems

to have prepared six Roman Lives, along with their Greek pairs, as part of a single project,³² and he then presumably wrote the finished versions each in turn. The Roman Lives of three of those pairs are included in this volume, *Brutus* (paired with *Dion*), *Younger Cato* (paired with *Phocion*) and *Antony* (paired with *Demetrius*): the remaining three pairs were *Alexander–Caesar*, *Agessilaus–Pompey* and (probably, though this is less certain than in the other five cases) *Nicias–Crassus*. His preparation of that project allowed a good deal of ‘cross-fertilization’ from his work for one Life to another, so that for instance an analysis developed for *Caesar* – the importance of Caesar’s friends in explaining his downfall (*Caes.* 51) – could be taken over in *Antony* (6) and *Brutus* (35), and stories found in his reading for *Younger Cato* could be used in *Pompey* (40, 44), *Pompey* material in *Brutus* (33), *Brutus* material in *Younger Cato* (73) and *Antony* material in *Brutus* (50).

Of the other Lives in this volume, *Agis–Cleomenes–Gracchi* and *Sertorius–Eumenes* seem later: that makes it more reasonable to sense some echoing of *Caesar* in the *Gracchi*, as suggested at the end of the previous section. But *Cimon–Lucullus* is earlier, towards the beginning of the series, and among other Lives *Demosthenes–Cicero* is also early, explicitly the fifth pair of the sequence (*Dem.* 3). We can trace ways in which Plutarch’s knowledge expanded between these two phases. Sometimes it is a matter of detail: he is better informed in *Antony*, for instance, than he was in *Cicero* on the unsavoury trading when the triumvirs were selecting victims for the proscriptions (*Cic.* 46, *Ant.* 19 with n. 118).³³ But one can also see a more general thickening of the narrative texture of, particularly, his accounts of the fifties and forties in this middle group of Lives when compared with *Cicero*; *Lucullus* too seems less well informed than the later group (Intro. *Luc.*).

The reason is surely that he has come across a new, and very good, source of information for that period, one that provides the backbone of much of his narrative for *Crassus*, *Pompey*, *Caesar*, *Younger Cato*, *Brutus* and *Antony*. Those Lives often show close similarities in emphasis, diction and interpretation when their narratives overlap: there are also telling points of parallel with the narrative that Appian gives in his *Civil Wars*, and those suggest that both authors are using the same source (and a single source, for otherwise one would have to suppose, implausibly, that both happened regularly to switch sources at the same points). The parallels become more regular with the year 60, which we happen to know was almost certainly³⁴ the starting-point of Asinius Pollio’s history. It is a very good bet indeed that this was the work that Plutarch was now using.³⁵ (It is also possible that it was some later writer who was himself using Pollio, but there is no reason to prefer that view.) If so, it was a good choice. Pollio was an

active participant in these events (*Cato* 53 and n. 276, *Ant.* 9 and n. 55), initially with Caesar and Antony and then withdrawing around 38 BCE into a sort of neutrality: he knew what he was talking about. He was also known for his frankness and independence of spirit, and was prepared to make barbed comments even about Julius Caesar and Octavian. Trenchant passages of political analysis such as *Caesar* 29, or the discussion of the composition and texture of the Roman crowd after Caesar's assassination (*Brut.* 18 and n. 110), will owe much to him. He was also, it seems, a gifted writer, and such graphic scenes as that of Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon (*Caes.* 32) or his gazing at the corpse-strewn battlefield of Pharsalus (ch. 46) appear to come from him.

Pollio provided a good deal of the information for this middle group of Lives, but Plutarch read widely in other materials as well. Where biographical material existed (and Cato and Brutus in particular attracted memoirs from admirers), he could find it valuable. (On this, and on other points made in this section, see the Introductions to each Life.) There were also separate works on particular wars or episodes, the Philippi or Parthian campaigns for instance, or – so it seems – on the death of Cleopatra. The amount of non-Pollio material seems to be greatest at these moments when the narrative is most moving and dramatic: perhaps those were the times when Plutarch particularly went in search of such material, perhaps it was simply that these were the episodes where there was most extra material to be had. Other first-hand material was also drawn into to his net: letters of Brutus, so it seems, or speeches of Antony, or memoirs of Cato's companion Munatius Rufus.

It is in this central phase that we can track Plutarch's combination of different sorts of material most clearly, but his method does not appear to have been very different in earlier and later phases of his production. There too he seems to have welcomed a strong central narrative (Sallust's *Histories* for *Sertorius* and *Lucullus*, the unidentified source that he shares with Tacitus for *Galba* and *Otho*; things are less clear with the *Gracchi*); there too he seems to have added supplementary material from different sources when he could, as we shall see in the Introductions to each Life.

So Plutarch's knowledge of Roman history expanded over the writing of the Parallel Lives, but it was expanding from a base that was not at all negligible. In particular, while working on *Cicero* he seems to have read a fair number of Cicero's own writings, including letters and speeches. At that time he also already knew the Memoirs of the emperor Augustus, which included the early years when we call him 'Octavian':³⁶ Plutarch may well have read them originally for the first of the Lives of the Caesars. This knowledge from years back could

also be recalled and exploited in the central group of Lives, for instance for Brutus's uneasy dealings with Cicero after the Ides of March (*Brut.* 6, 22, 24, and nn. 44, 137, 150) or for some details of the Philippi campaign (*Ant.* 22 and n. 131, *Brut.* 27, 41 and n. 226):³⁷ he may even have looked back at his own earlier writings and/or the notes he had then taken, using them as a sort of 'source'. It is noteworthy, too, that Plutarch does not always take Octavian's word as settling an issue; he can doubt the truthfulness of the founder of the principate just as he can doubt the truthfulness of anyone else (*Ant.* 22 and n. 131).³⁸

There were also other stories that Plutarch had known for years, probably known in that sort of way where one can no longer recall where one first heard them: Antony playing dice with Octavian and always losing (*Ant.* 33), a story he had also used in the (probably much earlier) essay *On the Fortune of the Romans*; or material on 'bulimia' (*Brut.* 25–6 with n. 161) which he also found useful for a passage in *Table Talk* (6.8.693e–5d).

Nor should we forget oral sources. Those would have been particularly important for *Galba* and *Otho*: as he toured the battlefield of Bedriacum with Mestrius Florus (see [section I](#) above), he clearly discussed Mestrius's own recollections, and at *Otho* 14 he records a conversation about, gruesomely, a mysterious pile of corpses. Many other eye-witnesses were still alive (the events were only a quarter of a century ago), and Plutarch will have been eager to learn what he could on those trips to Italy, or when Romans came to dine (cf. *Galb.* 28 and n. 187, *Otho* 10 and n. 53). Even for the more distant events recorded in the Parallel Lives memories could be strong. We have already seen one incident of that, with his great-grandfather's recounting of those forced marches from Chaeronea to Anticyra (see [Section I](#)); in the same Life there is another instance of a family tale, when Plutarch tells a story of the kitchens in Alexandria which he heard from his grandfather Lamprias (*Ant.* 28 and n. 163). As Plutarch muses on small-town existence at the beginning of *Demosthenes* (ch. 2, and Section I), he acknowledges the advantages to a historian of living in a big city:

Here he may not only have access to all kind of books, but through hearsay and personal inquiry he may succeed in uncovering those facts which have escaped the written authorities and yet are preserved in a more remarkably reliable form in human memory.

(*Dem.* 2)

There is much in these Lives which people might be talking about still.³⁹ These were great events, and Greek memories were long.

How, then, did Plutarch use this material? A modern narrative

historian tends to weave things together, with several books open at once on the desk, and now perhaps several websites open too. Matters were more difficult with the materials that Plutarch had to use. Books would normally be in the form of bulky papyrus rolls, twenty feet long or more. It was possible enough to read a single account continuously; it was much more difficult to have two different accounts open in front of one and combine them together, partly because of the physical cumbersomeness – reading a roll was a two-handed business – and partly because it would be awkward to roll back and forth to find places if the two versions treated matters in different orders. There were probably no numbered divisions or chapter-headings to help. Systematic reference-checking would be particularly difficult with a text that did not provide a linear narrative at all, a collection of letters, say, or a speech.

So combining accounts was difficult, but that did not mean that it could not be done. The easiest way would be to do whatever wide reading was necessary at a preliminary stage, and perhaps take notes (they could be assembled on a much more convenient notebook-style codex), perhaps simply consign material to memory. Then Plutarch would take a single source to have open before his eyes, Pollio or Sallust or that unidentified imperial historian for *Galba* and *Otho*. That would then provide the bulk of the material and the narrative articulation, but extra items could be added from that earlier reading. There might be times too when Plutarch would put down the main source and select another to have before his eyes as he composed: in *Antony*, the work of Dellius for the Parthian Wars, or Cicero's *Second Philippic* (which he does seem to have reread for this Life: see Intro. *Ant.*). But for most of the time the supplements to that main source would be made from his memory or from notes; and a few signs of the use of memory can duly be found, with slips, for instance, on who it was that delayed Antony outside the senate house on the Ides of March (*Caes.* 66, *Brut.* 17, *Ant.* 13 and n. 81), or fleeting inaccuracies on numbers or chronology (*Cato* 51 and n. 261, *Brut.* 27 and n. 176).

Once Plutarch had assembled the material, he could produce his own version, possibly by dictation to a slave or freedman assistant; and such assistants might also have helped in other ways, perhaps by reading to him aloud, perhaps even by reading for him some bulkier or more out-of-the-way sources. (Such assistants were a regular part of an intellectual's entourage: Seneca, for instance, was said to have been let down from time to time by those 'whom he had charged with questions to investigate'.⁴⁰) Probably Plutarch would not proceed immediately to a final version, but first write a fairly complete draft (in Greek, *hypomnema*, or 'prop for the memory'): perhaps some traces of such a draft can be found in analysis of the finished Lives,⁴¹ and

recent scholarship has tended to support that suggestion by arguing on different grounds for similar ‘drafts’ for the moral essays.⁴² Given the artistic polish of the versions we have, it would not be surprising if Plutarch had devoted all his attention to the style of his work at a separate, final stage, once the selection of material was virtually complete.

For Plutarch, like other ancient authors dealing with the past, did not simply write; he wrote *up*, giving these great events the sort of elaborate and stylish treatment that their momentousness deserved. Colour was added to scene after scene, and that could involve taking what we would regard as uncomfortable liberties with the material. At times the detail that Plutarch added to his narrative could be regarded as simple inferences, reconstructing what ‘must have’ happened. When Antony vomits in public after a heavy night, a scene Plutarch knew from the *Second Philippic*, it was reasonable, if slightly unpleasant, to add that a friend would hold out his toga in front of him (*Ant.* 9 and n. 58): that is what friends are for. A few chapters later, we can see Plutarch elaborating another scene from the *Philippic*, when Trebonius was discreetly testing Antony’s views on Julius Caesar with an eye to recruiting him as a fellow-conspirator (*Ant.* 13 and n. 79). Extra detail comes flooding in: Antony and Trebonius are now sharing a tent (which in fact they would not have done: *Ti. Gracch.* n. 22, but Plutarch might reasonably try to work out how the two might have found a private moment on a journey); Trebonius sounds him out ‘unobtrusively and cautiously’ (again, fair enough: that is the way one would); Antony neither joined the plot nor revealed it to Caesar (another fair inference).⁴³

There are times, though, when one cannot regard Plutarch as simply reconstructing historical truth. When he tells of the same events in different Lives, he can tell them differently: thus on the dream that warned Octavian before Philippi, or on the role that Antony played in the battle (*Brut.* 41–2 and nn. 226, 228, *Ant.* 22 and n. 131); thus on the sequence and detail of several acts of Caesar’s behaviour in his final months (*Caes.* 60–62, *Ant.* 12 and nn. 75–6). He cannot have thought all these versions equally true.

He might, though, have felt that the precise slant in each Life served a *deeper* truth, capturing something important about his hero even if it meant a little truth-bending in detail. He would not be the first or the last writer to do that, and he did care enough about the big picture of his heroes’ characters to want to get them right. But total faithfulness to the detail in his sources was a different matter, and that was not Plutarch’s way. And, after all, he could reasonably assume that his predecessors had proceeded in more or less the same way. Total confidence in the detail given by earlier writers would have

been as reckless for him as total confidence in Plutarch's detail would be for us.

IV. *Plutarch and Roman Politics*

'It was the Greek period of Roman history, stamped with the sign of the demagogue, the tyrant and the class war.' So wrote the greatest Roman historian of the twentieth century, Sir Ronald Syme:⁴⁴ it is not just ancient writers who occasionally allow themselves a colourful overstatement. And the last phase of the Roman Republic certainly emerges as a Greek period in Plutarch's presentation.

The categories in which he presents Roman politics are indeed very similar to those he uses for his Greek Lives. Time and again, political conflict is presented in terms that come down to the categories of 'the few' against 'the many' or 'the people':⁴⁵ that is the classic Greek way of describing faction, developed most famously in a trenchant chapter of Thucydides (3.82), and Plutarch too uses very much the same language in describing Greek civil discord.⁴⁶ The precise terms used for 'the few' may vary, and quite often Plutarch seems to mean 'the senate' (assuming a degree of unanimity in that body that was not always there: cf. *Luc.* 38, *Cato* 51, *Brut.* 21); elsewhere they are sometimes 'the supporters of the elite' or the 'aristocratically minded' (Greek, *aristokratikoi*: *Cato* 26, *Ant.* 5), sometimes 'the most distinguished', sometimes 'the oligarchically minded' (*C. Gracch.* 3, 11), sometimes the 'good men' or 'the better element' (more literally 'gentlemen': *Cato* 27, 49), sometimes 'the senate and the soundest of the citizens' (*Luc.* 35), sometimes the 'rich' (*Cato* 31) – but it does seem to be members of the same conservative elite that he always has in mind. Groups that do not fit the schema – the *equites* ('knights'), for instance, important socially and economically and sometimes politically, or the local grandees around Italy whom Cicero often describes as *domi nobiles* ('nobles within their communities') – tend to be ignored; so are distinctively Roman institutions such as *clientela* (so that Pompey's raising of an army from his heartland of Picenum can be described without a mention of *clientela*: *Pomp.* 6). When a man's ambitions are defined more fully, it tends to be in terms of constitutional change, 'revolution' (*Sert.* 27 and n. 136, *Brut.* 8 and n. 56, *Ant.* 9), and such politicians find a ready ear: 'there were also a fair number of the ordinary people who wanted to see Pompey return because they hoped for a revolution' (*Cato* 27). And the figures adopting so populist a posture are readily called 'demagogues':⁴⁷ there is often a whiff of the Athenian stereotype, and Cleon in particular, in the way such demagogues are portrayed, especially Clodius. Some

particular institutions are described misleadingly, such as the tribunate: even the tribunicial veto, important as it was to the politics of 133 and early 49 in particular, seems to be misunderstood (Ti. *Gracch.* 10 and nn. 46, 50, *Cato* 20, *Ant.* 5 and n. 32). Other important distinctions, such as the different types of popular assembly, are not drawn at all (*Cato* 42 and nn. 218, 220).

Some of these features are more damaging than others. Historians still debate the anatomy of Roman political life, and it is less usual now than it was a generation ago to regard power as in the hands of a closed oligarchy and to discount the elements of popular debate. Not everything was fixed in advance; rhetoric could sway the people or the senate. Elections were fought hard, even if corruptly and violently – indeed, the very facts of corruption and intimidation imply that votes mattered, and might go elsewhere and make a difference if the right bribes and promises and threats were not made. Certainly people at the time spoke of their politics much as Plutarch speaks. Sallust too makes much use of a contrast between ‘the few’ (or ‘senate’ or ‘nobles’) and ‘the people’ (‘Thus everything was torn asunder into two parts [or ‘factions’, *partes*], and the state was left in the middle and ripped apart’: *Jug.* 41; ‘politicians used fair names, some affecting to defend the people’s rights and others to maximize the authority of the senate: they pretended concern for the public good, but each was concerned for his own power’: *Cat.* 38). Orators too could find it useful to fit themselves or their enemies into stereotypes or traditions, sometimes purely abusive – the Clodius that emerges from Cicero’s speeches also has a lot of the demagogue about him – sometimes more reflective (and no less insidious for it), such as the tendentious little disquisition in Cicero’s *Pro Sestio* (‘In this state there have always been two types of people who wanted to be politicians and successful in public life, one who wanted to be – and to be called – “popular” and another who wanted to be “optimates”’: *Sest.* 96). Accusations of ‘seeking *regnum*’ were the stuff of everyday political exchange. And, after all, if one thinks of what actually happened in the generation after Actium, scaremongering talk of revolution and monarchy was not so fantastic or deluded as all that.

Nonetheless, Plutarch pushes his analysis further and more relentlessly than most,⁴⁸ and there are times when it does appear that he has simplified away other, complicating strands that a modern historian would wish to emphasize more. This is a particular issue with the Gracchi, where the parallel account of Appian puts more stress on an ‘Italian’ theme, whereas Plutarch concentrates again on his favourite picture of an urban clash of ‘the few’ (or ‘the rich’) and ‘the many’. There are hints that both authors have accentuated the aspects that fit their own vision (Intro. *Gracch.*), and both analyses

need to be treated with caution.

So Plutarch simplifies politics at Rome. Perhaps that is just a defect of his historical understanding, an ingrained Greekness of mindset that only noticed what it could easily grasp. But we should again remember the comparative technique. The more similar Greek and Roman politics could be made to seem, the more comparable Plutarch's figures would be: after all, the starting-point of a comparison is often how people faced and handled similar issues, the application of idealism to a crisis of wealth- and land-distribution (*Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.*), the need for realism when a philosopher faced a world-conqueror (*Phoc.–Cato*), the rights and wrongs of tyrannicide (*Dion–Brut.*). So it is not just on the Roman side that distinctive, culture-specific features are understressed – he has not much to say about political clubs (Greek *hetaireiai*), for instance, in the Athenian Lives – and he works on his Greek Lives too to bring the worlds closer together: the techniques used by Plutarch's Cimon or Nicias (*Cim.* 10, *Nic.* 3) to buy political goodwill may owe something to Roman stereotypes just as his Clodius owes something to Cleon.

Not that Plutarch smooths away all the features that made Rome and Roman politics distinctive. We have already seen this, with the stress on Roman militarism that he finds important for understanding Coriolanus and Marcellus (see [Section II](#) above). Nor, once again, does he hesitate to evaluate as well as to describe. Numa may have brought peace, but it did not last, and all too soon Roman bellicosity 'filled Italy with corpses and blood':

'But', someone will say, 'did not Rome make her great advances through war?' That is a question requiring a lengthy answer to those who define 'advance' in terms of wealth, luxury, and empire rather than safety, restraint, and honest independence.

(*Comp. Lycurgus–Numa* 4)

In this volume a similar distaste for Roman bellicosity can be sensed in *Sertorius* (Intro. *Sert.*). Roman aesthetic sensibility could be deficient too. Plutarch had seen some beautiful marble columns waiting at Athens to be transported to Rome: when they got there, Roman craftsmen planed and chiselled and wrecked the proportions (*Popl.* 15). The architectural glories of Pericles' Athens outdid anything the Roman Republic had to offer (*Pericles* 15). And Romans, he knows, could be narrow-minded blowhards when it came to anything intellectual. The elder Cato prophesied that Greek culture could be disastrous to Rome. He was wrong:

the time when Rome reached its greatest success was the time when it welcomed Greek studies and education.

Those past tenses tell a tale too. The Roman world that Plutarch knew had its men like Sosius Senecio and Mestrius Florus, and they would be among his readers; but Plutarch knew not to hope for too much from all of their Roman contemporaries.

For all Plutarch's admiration, then, of Roman achievements, and for all his acknowledgement of the glories of peace, there is still that distinctive detachment. We saw it in his contentment with small-town Chaeronea; we saw it in his advice to keep a mind tranquilly at ease, not always dreaming of a senatorial career; we saw it in his coolness about Octavian and his readiness to doubt his veracity; we see it in his attitude to the most basic Roman values. Still, detachment is not derision, and Plutarch is not blind to Greek weaknesses too, in particular that ingrained factionalism that had meant that so much of their history had been spent in fighting one another. Greece had owed Rome a debt of gratitude three hundred years earlier when Flaminius gave them the freedom that they had been unable to give themselves (*Flam.* 11), and it owed them gratitude still, even now that freedom was more qualified and the Roman masters were a fact of life. It is part of Plutarch's humanity to acknowledge and acclaim greatness in all its different forms, not uncritically but not ungenerously. There was plenty of greatness at Rome, and there is plenty of generosity in the Lives of this volume.

Notes

1. For the dates see Section II above and Intro. *Galb.*–*Otho*.
2. K. Clarke, *Making Time for the Past* (2008), esp. pp. 338–69.
3. Other, smaller battles: *Theseus* 27 ('many Amazons' died there) and *Arat.* 16; Lysander's tomb was 'by the roadside as one goes from Chaeronea to Delphi' (*Lysander* 29). On Plutarch and Chaeronea see Jones, *P&R*, pp. 3–12.
4. References to individual introductions are indicated in this way.
5. Cf. *Sert.* 6, 9, 24; *Luc.* 7, 20, 29; *Cato* 12, 34–40; *Brut.* 6 and n. 49; *Galb.* 4 and n. 25; *Galb.* 20 (Otho in Lusitania); more instances collected in Pelling, *P&H*, p. 233, n. 91 (cf. also S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (1996), pp. 156–7).
6. Swain, *ibid.*, pp. 161–86, and M. Trapp in *The Statesman in Plutarch's Lives*, ed. L. de Blois and others (2001), pp. 189–200, have thoughtful discussions of Plutarch's advice and its relation to the political norms of his day.
7. Cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 1 and n. 7.

8. Along of course with their pairs, Marcellus for Pelopidas and Cimon for Lucullus. On the relative chronology of the Lives, C. P. Jones, *JRS* 56 (1966), 61–74 (= B. Scardigli (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (1995), pp. 95–123), is still the basic treatment. Some fair criticisms of Jones's method were made by J. Geiger in *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 61, n. 47 (cf. also Pelling, *P&H*, p. 9), but the outlines seem clear enough.
9. Pliny *Ep.* 8.24, 3.1, 4.3.
10. Juvenal *Satires* 3.58–125.
11. On these see esp. Jones, *P&R*, chs. 5–6; B. Puech, 'Prosopographie des amis des Plutarque', *ANRW* ii.33.6 (1992), 4831–93.
12. Plut. *Table Talk* 1.5.623a, 8.10.734c–d, 8.7.727d–e.
13. As for instance with features of the tribunate (*Ti. Gracch.* 10, 15; *Ant.* 8), the augurate (*Ant.* 5), a particular festival (*Ant.* 8) and the length of a Roman mile (*C. Gracch.* 7). Roman words are explained at *Sert.* 14 (*bullā*), 18 (*magnus*); *Luc.* 37 (*uici*); *Ant.* 4 (*decies*), 59 (*deliciae*); *Galb.* 12 (*principia*), 24 (*optio* and *tesserarius*); *Otho* 12 (*legio*). Some of these cases may be stylistic mannerisms, apologizing for the use of Latin terms without implying that the audience really needed the explanations (not many would really have needed *magnus* or *legio* explained); it is hard to think that they all are. Not that Plutarch always gets his explanations right (see n. 31).
14. This view was expressed most influentially by K. Ziegler: 'The whole enterprise of the *Parallel Lives* served the purpose ... of bringing closer and closer together the Greeks and the Romans as the wielders of empire, to allow each to get to know the other better and to respect each other more; to show the Romans that Greeks were not mere contemptible *Graeculi* ... and the Greeks that Romans were not barbarians' (*Plutarchos von Chaironeia* (1949), p. 260 (= Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* 21 (1951), p. 867)).
15. Jones, *P&R*, esp. ch. 11.
16. *Table Talk* 2.1.632a, a discussion of how jokes work. Plutarch and Sosius have been discussing Avidius Quietus's provincial government. Avidius's hands were chill with some disease, but Aufidius Modestus says, 'but they're warm from your province', a pleasantry that only works because Avidius was in fact beyond reproach. General expectations of personal enrichment are there as important as Avidius's spotlessness, seen as an exception to that norm.
17. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, pp. 169–71.
18. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 309 – though Duff only adopts that formulation in a qualified way. Cf. Pelling, *P&H*, p. 236, n. 128, pp. 259–60, 264, n. 39.

19. *Ant.* 56, *Brut.* 47 and n. 244 (cf. *Comp. Cim.–Luc.* 1 with n. 1). On Plutarch's use of such fatalistic language, cf. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, pp. 151–61 and esp. pp. 157–61: he notes that the passage of Rome to monarchy is one of three themes that tend to elicit such comments, the others being Rome's origins and its expansion into the Greek world.
20. On the date, cf. Intro. *Galb.–Otho*.
21. At least, he speaks of projected Lives of Metellus and Leonidas which there is no sign that he published (*Mar.* 29, *On the Malice of Herodotus* 866b): cf. Intro. *Sert.* A reference in *Antony* suggests that that Life, which belongs somewhere in or just after the middle of the series, was published before c. 117 CE (*Ant.* 34 and n. 193).
22. On the relative chronology see n. 8 above and the article of Jones cited there.
23. For a thorough analysis of these programmatic statements see Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, pp. 13–51.
24. On this see Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 5, esp. pp. 117–18 on Plutarch's concern to include material which Thucydides omitted.
25. *Iliad* 24.630.
26. Sophocles, fr. 636 R., from the lost play *The Drummers*.
27. Most, but not all: four pairs lack such an epilogue, including *Phoc.–Cato*. The reasons for this are disputed (Intro. *Cato*). A further variation in three pairs (*Aem.–Tim.*, *Cor.–Alc.* and *Sert.–Eum.*) is the placing of the Roman Life before the Greek (cf. Intro. *Sert.*).
28. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*.
29. P. Stadter, 'The rhetoric of virtue in Plutarch's Lives' in L. van der Stockt (ed.), *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch* (2000), pp. 493–510.
30. Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 10.
31. For one such misunderstanding of Latin, cf. *Galb.* 24 with n. 149; another perhaps at *Otho* 18 with n. 90. He does not seem to have read Latin poetry for pleasure: the quotation of Horace at *Luc.* 39 is exceptional (see n. 225 there). Contrast the Greek Lives, which are full of quotations and allusions to poetry.
32. Or so I argued in 1979 in an article reprinted as *P&H*, ch. 1. There has been some further discussion since (cf. *P&H*, pp. 26–9), but the argument has on the whole been accepted. 'Towards the middle of that series', because *Dion–Brut.* was the twelfth pair (*Dion* 2): detailed analysis of the relative chronology suggests that there is more room for the rest of this group in slightly later positions than in slightly earlier.
33. There are some similar cases in *Crassus* and *Pompey* where he seems better informed than he was in *Cicero* (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 2–3).

34. Horace *Odes* 2.1.1, describing the themes of Pollio's history: 'the civil war that began to be stirred in the consulship of Metellus', that is, presumably, the consulship of Q. Caecilius Metellus in 60 BCE. A. J. Woodman (in *Myth, History and Culture in Republican Rome*, ed. D. Braund and C. Gill (2003), pp. 191–216) has suggested that the relevant consulship might be the earlier one of Q. Metellus Numidicus (*Luc.* n.2) in 109 BCE: I give my reasons for rejecting this in *The Limits of Biography*, ed. B. McGing and J. Mossman (2006), pp. 271–2, n. 31.
35. Cf. Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 12–13, and in *Limits of Biography* (see previous n.), esp. pp. 264–5; A. M. Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio* (1992), pp. 39–50, a thoughtful treatment of how much we should attribute to Appian and Dio and how much to their sources, including Pollio; and L. Pitcher's chapter on 'The Roman Historians after Livy' in the *Blackwell Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. M. Griffin (2009), pp. 267–76.
36. For Plutarch's reading of Cicero see Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 16–17. For Augustus's *Memoirs* see *Cic.* 45, *Comp. Dem.–Cic.* and Section III: I discuss this more fully in a collection on *The Lost Memoirs of Augustus*, ed. C. Smith and A. Powell (2009), pp. 41–64. For 'Octavian' see *Brut.* n. 132.
37. For other possible cases see *Cato* 44 and n. 234, 50 and n. 259; *Brut.* 12 and n. 73.
38. Notice too the edge at *Cato* 72 (with n. 335), where Plutarch notes how ready people have been to give Julius Caesar the benefit of the moral doubt. It is not clear that he does himself. For Plutarch's awareness of the misrepresentations of propaganda, cf. *Ant.* 58–9; *Intro. Sert.*; *Brut.* 1 and nn. 5 and 10, 7 and n. 53; *Pomp.* 10 (Oppius); *Alc.* 3 (Antiphon); *Arat.* 38 (Phylarchus); see also Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 145–6.
39. Cf. *Intro. Luc.*
40. Quintilian 10.1.128.
41. I argued this in articles published in 1979 and 1985, reprinted as *P&H*, chs. 1–2.
42. See, for example, L. van der Stockt, *American Journal of Philology* 120 (1999), 575–99.
43. For further imaginative exploitation of the *Second Philippic*, cf. *Ant.* 9 and n. 58, 10 and n. 65, 11 and n. 70, 21 and nn. 124–7.
44. R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (1939), p. 441.
45. See, for example, *Luc.* 35, *Cato* 31 with n. 161, 51 with n. 265. Cf. Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 9, esp. pp. 211–17, and L. de Blois, *ANRW* ii.33.6 (1992), 4568–4615.
46. See, for example, *Cim.* 10, 15; *Nicias* 2, 11; *Alc.* 13, 21, 26; *Pericles*

7, 9, 10, 11, 15; *Dion* 28.

47. *Luc.* 5. 20, 24, 33, 35, *Cato* 31, *Brut.* 30, *Ant.* 2.

48. Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 213–17.

Further Reading

The introductions to each Life will give guidance on works that are specifically relevant to each figure and each work. The best general introduction to Plutarch is still Donald Russell's *Plutarch* (1973); the most penetrating study of the Lives, concentrating especially on their moralism, is Tim Duff's *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (1999). Plutarch's relationship with Rome is the theme of Christopher Jones's *Plutarch and Rome* (1971). Many of my own essays on Plutarch are collected in *Plutarch and History* (2002). Simon Swain's *Hellenism and Empire* (1996) treats Plutarch along with other Greek cultural figures of the principate; similar themes are also addressed in Tim Whitmarsh's *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire* (2001) and in Simon Goldhill's edited collection *Being Greek under Rome* (2001). Barbara Scardigli collected important articles in her 1995 collection *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, and Tim Duff is currently editing a volume of Oxford Readings in Plutarch's Lives. There is much of value in the encyclopaedic series *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, especially ii.33.6 (1992) which was devoted to Plutarch. Two Companions to Plutarch are also now promised, a *Cambridge Companion* edited by Frances Titchener and Alexei Zadorojnyi and a *Blackwell Companion* edited by Mark Beck.

Conferences on Plutarch are now legion, many of them under the aegis of the International Plutarch Society: most have given rise to edited volumes, of which *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (ed. P. Stadter, 1992), *Plutarch and his Intellectual World* (ed. J. Mossman, 1997) and *The Statesman in Plutarch's Lives* i–ii (ed. L. de Blois, J. Bons, T. Kessels and D. M. Schenkeveld, 2004) have most to interest the general reader.

THE GRACCHI

INTRODUCTION TO THE GRACCHI

The Gracchi were epoch-making:

This is said to have been the first outbreak of civil strife in Rome that was decided by the bloodshed and death of citizens since the expulsion of the kings.
(*Ti. Gracch.* 20)

And this breaking of political violence introduced a theme that would dominate the next hundred years until the Republic itself had fallen. These Lives help us to see not merely the violence but the reasons for it: the deep need for social reform with the hopelessness of the poor; the new riches of empire that, with the Attalus legacy (*Ti. Gracch.* 14), made ambitious schemes possible; the rift between Rome and Italy; and the fierce, uncompromising opposition of the rich and powerful who were prepared to be brutal in their own defence. Some of these themes Plutarch has already touched on (along with Rome's militarism, another crucial theme of the next century) in his Lives of earlier figures. The social divisions were already clear in the Struggle of the Orders and were explored in *Coriolanus* and *Camillus*, and in *Coriolanus* in particular we saw the dangers of unbending opposition to the poor; the dangers of demagoguery were seen in *Fabius*, while the possibilities of a more enlightened popular leadership emerged in *Poplicola*; the reluctance of the governing class to embrace change is no surprise after the *Elder Cato*. But the *Gracchi* still strike a different note. In those Lives of earlier figures Plutarch's sympathies are usually, broadly, on the side of the establishment: demagoguery is bad (Minucius in *Fabius*), and in *Coriolanus* the sinister tribunes, manipulating the poor by unscrupulous rhetoric, are even less likeable than the hero; the elder Cato is hardly flawless, but his conservatism is not treated unsympathetically. In the *Gracchi*, by contrast, the force of the brothers' vision and the nobility of their motives are felt: they do

have a strong social point. The conservatism of their opponents is of the blindest and most selfish variety. This does not mean that the Gracchi are straightforwardly right, as we shall see: indeed, Plutarch seems clear that in the end they were mistaken. But their enemies are much more straightforwardly wrong.

The Lives of the brothers certainly need to be taken closely together, and they form a virtually continuous narrative in a way not unlike that of *Galba* and *Otho*:¹ in fact they form part of a double pair, coupled with the Spartan kings Agis and Cleomenes, in an ambitious elaboration of Plutarch's strategy of 'parallels'.² Part of that elaboration is in the way that the narrative encourages us to compare not merely the Roman pair with the Greek, but also the brothers with one another: this is most explicit in the joint preface to the two Lives at *Tiberius Gracchus* 1–2. It is natural to infer that they belong towards the end of the writing of the series, once Plutarch had developed confidence in his comparative technique and was ready to try something a little different. In that case, Plutarch's original readers may already have been able to sense some similarities of rhythm and theme to later events and particularly to the death of Caesar: the way for instance that Tiberius is urged on by the graffiti written in public places (*Ti. Gracch.* 8 and n. 40 ~ *Caes.* 62, *Brut.* 9); or that he feels that he has to risk coming to the senate in order to defuse the accusations of wanting tyranny (*Ti. Gracch.* 17 and n. 76 ~ *Caes.* 63–4, cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 14 and n. 62); or Gaius's failure to restrain his more reckless friends, and the disaster they consequently bring (*C. Gracch.* 13 and n. 63 ~ *Caes.* 51); or the way the people's enthusiasm may waver but then bursts out with new fervour after their champion's death (*Ti. Gracch.* 21, *C. Gracch.* 11, 18 and n. 87 ~ *Caes.* 67–8). So the Gracchi not merely introduce the last phase of the Roman Republic, their fate also sounds a number of notes that will be heard again at the end, just as the end of *Romulus* too prefigures the death of Caesar.³ Nor is that a purely literary pattern; it makes a historical point. The Gracchi are unleashing forces and revealing divisions that are going to recur time and again, until eventually the Republic can withstand them no more and Caesar, the man who has exploited those forces and divisions most dynamically of all, himself falls their victim at the end.

The double pairing is one of Plutarch's most successful as well as his most elaborate. The Gracchi do have a lot in common with Agis and Cleomenes.⁴ In both cases the younger man, linked through family (Cleomenes married Agis's widow), takes over and takes further the other's bold revolutionary project; in each case, too, the project confronts a dangerous gulf that had opened between the rich landowners and the destitute poor (*Agis* 5 ~ *Ti. Gracch.* 8), and could

be seen as a reinvigoration of their country through an appeal to an older tradition, in the Spartan case by a return to the laws of Lycurgus, in the Roman by an attempt to apply the terms of an ancient land-law. In each case they are inspired by a pride in their royal or noble lineage; and women are prominent in both sets of events – in the Roman case the brothers' mother Cornelia and Gaius's wife Licinia, at Sparta Agis's mother Agesistrata and grandmother Archidamia (*Agis* 4, 7, 20), Cleombrotus's wife Chilonis (*Agis* 17), Agiatis who was wife in turn of both Agis and Cleomenes (*Cleom.* 1, 22), and Cleomenes' mother Cratesicleia (*Cleom.* 6, 22, 38).⁵ This interest in women's roles is a general feature of Plutarch's writings, but here it also fits with the importance of family factors. Philosophy plays a part too, with the Stoic Sphaerus inspiring Cleomenes (*Cleom.* 2, 11) as Blossius inspired Tiberius (*Ti. Gracch.* 8). In each case the visionary campaign is opposed by antagonists who are ruthlessly intent on defending their own riches and privileges against the dangers of land-distribution (*Agis* 7, 11, 13, 16, *Ti. Gracch.* 9–13, *C. Gracch.* 8–9); in each case opposing these unscrupulous enemies involved radical moves which were constitutionally questionable or even outrageous, in the Spartan case Agis's deposition of one set of ephors and then Cleomenes' murder of another (*Agis* 12, *Cleom.* 7–8), in the Roman the removal of Tiberius's fellow-tribune Octavius (*Ti. Gracch.* 11–2) and the iteration of the brothers' own tribunates (*Ti. Gracch.* 16, *C. Gracch.* 8). Yet in all four cases the uncompromising enemies eventually win the day, and all meet violent deaths.

The most important link of all is the 'ambition' that drove both the Greek and the Roman pair to popular policies that turned sour. Plutarch develops the point right at the beginning of the double pairing. Distinguishing true virtue from its illusory counterparts can be difficult, he says, and a particular danger faces men in public life who seek popular approval: it is all too easy for them to be carried away by ambition to become followers where they should be leaders, and the caprice of the mob can be released in such a way that it is no longer controllable.

I was prompted to make these points about glory derived from the populace after reflecting upon the fortunes of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Their own birth, their upbringing and their political principles were all uniformly outstanding; yet they were destroyed not so much by a limitless passion for glory as by a fear of losing the glory they had. The reason for this was by no means discreditable, because they had enjoyed the great goodwill of the citizens and were ashamed at not repaying it – as if it were a debt. They always strove to outdo the honours conferred on them by adopting beneficial policies, and then because they were appreciated they were honoured more. Thus they became fired personally with as much ambition for the people as were the people for them. In consequence they unwittingly came to adopt policies with

which it was no longer proper to remain associated, but which by this stage it would be dishonourable for them to abandon.

At any rate, this will be for you⁶ to decide upon from my account. With the Gracchi we shall compare a pair of popular leaders at Sparta, the kings Agis and Cleomenes. Like the Gracchi, these two exalted the people and restored a fine, just constitution that had been in abeyance for a long period. But they too were hated by powerful citizens who refused to abandon their characteristic greed. While the Spartans were not actually brothers, they did adopt related policies, very much akin to one another.

(Agis 2, tr. R. J. A. Talbert, Penguin Classic *Plutarch on Sparta* (2nd edn, 2005))

So: ambition is crucial. The Greek word is more charged and more precise: this is *philotimia*, ‘love of honour’, both the more specific honours of crowns and magistracies and the more generalized acclaim of contemporaries and of later generations – those ‘honours’ from the people that drove the Gracchi on to a stage where it was ‘dishonourable’ to step back. In the narratives we see it not merely at the launching of the great programmes themselves,⁷ but also in Cleomenes’ sparing of Megalopolis, where ‘my wish,’ he said, ‘is always to give enhancement of my reputation priority over mere advantage’ (*Cleom.* 24); or Tiberius’s concern that it would be ‘a shame and an unbearable humiliation’ to skulk at home because of a bad omen (*Ti. Gracch.* 17); or the concern Gaius shows to reach ‘extremely reasonable and honourable’ amends for the provincial oppression shown by Quintus Fabius (*C. Gracch.* 6). It can infect others too: the young of Sparta catch the flavour, marching out to war ‘with enthusiasm and *philotimia*’ (*Agis* 14); honour becomes a crucial concern of Cleomenes’ family too when they meet their deaths (*Cleom.* 36–8), and of Licinia as Gaius sets out to meet his doom (*C. Gracch.* 15). There is particular point, then, in ending with a stress on the honours, including divine honours, that the people paid the two brothers after their death (*C. Gracch.* 18).

Such a love of honour can have both highly positive and highly negative consequences. Various other Lives – *Alcibiades*, *Marius*, *Alexander*, and in particular the pair *Philopoemen* and *Flaminius* – explore these ambivalences, and in *Philopoemen* and *Flaminius* it becomes clear that *philotimia* can easily topple over into the closely neighbouring *philonikia* (a ‘love of quarrels’ and perhaps also ‘a love of victory’).⁸ There is something of the same here. On the one hand, it seems clear that, in the last analysis, the Gracchi got things wrong: otherwise it would make little sense for Plutarch to muse that all this would never have happened had Scipio Aemilianus still been in Rome, presumably to restrain Tiberius himself as well as his opponents (*Ti. Gracch.* 7, cf. 21⁹). Those initial remarks in *Agis* themselves made it clear that, for Plutarch, the brothers went too far, and there should

have come a point when they desisted. And yet the texturing of the narrative itself is persistently favourable. Their motives are high ones, the restoration of the Italian countryside after the depredations of the rich and noble, the removal of corruption and malpractice, the prosperity of all Italy; true, Gaius also seeks vengeance for his brother, but it is not clear that this would have been felt as a bad quality. On the other hand the brothers' opponents are cast in a persistently unfriendly light, both in their self-seeking motives and in their ruthless and unscrupulous tactics.¹⁰ Tiberius and Gaius are in contrast seen as seeking desperately to keep the peace, especially during the final eruptions of bloodshed that lead to their deaths.¹¹ Gaius's desire to avoid violence is cast into particular relief by the much more bloodthirsty and immoderate behaviour of his associate Fulvius Flaccus.¹² A differently textured version of these events certainly existed. Cicero recurrently speaks of men like Octavius, Opimius and Drusus as fine examples of patriotism;¹³ and the fragmentary narrative of Diodorus, probably drawing on the lost history of Posidonius, presents us with a much more violent Gaius.¹⁴ But Plutarch, true to the principle he enunciates (but does not always keep) of giving historical figures the benefit of any moral doubt (*On the Malice of Herodotus* 855b–856d) and not over-emphasizing any bad qualities (Intro. *Cim.–Luc.*), presents a conflict between men of noble ideals and opponents whose ruthlessness verges on villainy.

We can find in Plutarch's Lives other cases of heroes whose public spirit is impeccable and whose ideals are noble, but who nevertheless are driven by these good motives to policies that eventually damage their states: Brutus is one example, for it was in the end a bad thing to kill Caesar, the gentlest doctor that the state could find (*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 2: cf. Intro. *Brut.*); Philopoemen might be another, for his policy of firm resistance to Rome may eventually have been counter-productive; yet in neither of those cases should such reservations wholly remove the admiration for the initial ideals. But the Gracchi provide even more difficult a problem, for here the simple moral question is more difficult. We can eventually judge that Brutus should not have struck and that Philopoemen should have compromised, but what *should* the Gracchi (or for that matter Agis and Cleomenes) have done? When and how, exactly, did they go wrong, and when should they have stopped? When they could so clearly see the malaise of the Italian countryside or of the state, should they simply have made their case and then withdrawn it when they saw the strength of the opposition? That is what Laelius did, and people called him 'the wise' (*Ti. Gracch.* 8); but it is surely not only a modern sensibility that finds such acquiescence less than admirable. Plutarch seems clear that Tiberius was wrong to depose Octavius ('a measure which was neither

constitutional nor appropriate', *Ti. Gracch.* 11, cf. *Comp. Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.* 5), but there is no attempt to say what he should have done instead. Modern treatments of Plutarch's moralism¹⁵ have increasingly stressed that he provides test-cases which can be ethically thought-provoking, often less concerned to provide clear-cut moral guidance than to depict the nature of human experience as we track the trials that virtue can encounter in the hard world of political reality. This complex double pair is a particularly good example of that.

Plutarch's narrative of these events, especially of each man's final days, is the most detailed we have, even though the exact chronology and sequence is often difficult to pin down. The narrative is particularly exciting and vigorous even by his high standards, and enlivened further by an unusually extensive use of direct speech (*Ti. Gracch.* 9 and 15 with n. 44, *C. Gracch.* 3 and n. 18, 4 and n. 24; so also in the Greek Lives, *Agis* 17, *Cleom.* 31): no wonder that some have detected the influence of the theatre in the way Plutarch casts this narrative.¹⁶

Appian's *Civil Wars* also gives an interesting version, one that sometimes overlaps enough with Plutarch to suggest a common source (notice especially App. *Civil Wars* 1.7–8 and *Ti. Gracch.* 8 with n. 34). Appian is often fuller when exploring the issues, especially the countryside issues, whereas Plutarch comes into his own when tracing through the drama and venom of the confrontations at Rome. One particularly important difference between the two is Appian's greater stress on the 'Italian' strand. For him the problem is one of Italian manpower, with the Italians too poor to raise families, and Tiberius tries to favour the poor (including it seems the allies) throughout Italy. This may well be derived from a source, but the emphasis is Appian's own, heralding the interest in the plight of Italy and the tension between Italy and Rome that is going to be a leading theme of his *Civil Wars* and will reach its climax in the agonies of the Perusine War (41–40 BCE) in the first half of his Book 5. There is something of this Italian stress in Plutarch too, enough to show that he knew the theme (*Ti. Gracch.* 8 mentions the way the poor were forced off their lands and could not raise a family and *C. Gracch.* 3 describes how 'an immense multitude poured into the city from various parts of Italy' to support Gaius¹⁷), but he does not make much of it: he prefers to present the conflict in terms of the 'people' or the 'poor' against the 'aristocrats' or the 'nobles' or (particularly in these Lives) the 'rich'. And he is clearly thinking of Roman *citizens*, not allies: 'the poorest and most needy of the citizens' had suffered and ownership would now pass to 'those citizens who most needed help' (*Ti. Gracch.* 8 and 9). As we saw in the General Introduction (IV), pictures of this sort are not unusual in Plutarch, who often tends to simplify more complex

divisions into ‘the-few-against-the-many’ stereotype familiar from Greek political theory;¹⁸ but it is again important to the strategy of the double pair as well, as these divisions also closely echo those that were important for Agis and Cleomenes, where it was ‘the rich’ who opposed the reforms and the ‘people’ or the ‘poor’ who were eager for change (*Agis* 7, 11, 14, *Cleom.* 3). As a matter of history, scholars are still divided on whether Tiberius’s reforms extended to the allies or not;¹⁹ one factor that should be clear in this debate is that both Appian and Plutarch have good thematic reasons for favouring the interpretation and emphasis that each prefers.

It is hard to be sure of Plutarch’s sources for this, even the good, detailed source which he shares with Appian. The Italian scholar Emilio Gabba thought that Appian’s source might be Asinius Pollio, who is very likely to be Plutarch’s principal source for the later Republican Lives;²⁰ but Pollio is rather unlikely, so most other scholars have thought, to have begun his history so early, or to have included so much detail in any retrospect.²¹ Plutarch quotes several authors himself: Polybius (*Ti. Gracch.* 4), but Polybius’s narrative ended in 146 BCE and he can evidently not be a source for much more than that incidental item; Cornelius Nepos (*Ti. Gracch.* 21), whose biographies he may well have known at first-hand, but they are unlikely to have been full enough to be a main source (and notice that at *Ti. Gracch.* 21 Nepos’s account is corrected by the version given by ‘most writers’); and a passage of Cicero (*C. Gracch.* 1) and the works of Gaius Fannius (*Ti. Gracch.* 4) and Gaius Gracchus himself (*Ti. Gracch.* 8, *C. Gracch.* 1), more on all of whom below. Plutarch also mentions the letters of Cornelia, but in a way that suggests he has not read them (*C. Gracch.* 13 and n. 65). Among the other authoritative narrative sources he might have consulted were Posidonius, whom he quotes half a dozen times elsewhere in the Lives; Strabo, whom he elsewhere quotes three times; and (less likely) the Roman annalists Sempronius Asellio and L. Calpurnius Piso. A further, rather different, suggestion is that a Roman drama on the death of Gaius influenced Plutarch’s account, whether or not he knew it at first hand.²² That is an exciting possibility, and certainly scenes like that of Licinia at *C. Gracch.* 15 are extremely dramatic; but we should not underrate either Plutarch’s capacity to inject his own theatricality into an account or the similarity of texture of those final chapters to the rest of his account.

One thing is clear, that the events soon became clouded in propaganda: this affects the source question. The sympathetic tone of much of Plutarch’s narrative is doubtless partly owed to his own generous principles, as we have seen, but it also suggests he had access to a friendlier version than, say, Posidonius, who – at least if we can judge from the fragmentary account of Diodorus, who is

normally thought to be using Posidonius – was clearly hostile.²³ Some of that warmer perspective may eventually be owed to Gaius Gracchus's own 'pamphlet' on his brother, a work that Plutarch knew existed (*Ti. Gracch.* 8) and that certainly contained one element which he highlights, the serpent story of *Tiberius Gracchus* 1 (where see n. 4). It is not impossible, but not certain, that he knew this at first hand, but that can evidently not be the source for large parts of Gaius's own Life (especially his death!). The same goes for the quotations from Tiberius's and Gaius's own speeches: we know that the speeches did survive until Plutarch's day and it seems likely that his versions are reasonably accurate (*Ti. Gracch.* 9 and n. 44, *C. Gracch.* 2 and n. 12, 3 and n. 18), but the material might have been transmitted by historical or biographical sources (cf. *C. Gracch.* 4 and n. 24) just as Cornelia's letters seem to have been (*C. Gracch.* 13 and n. 65), and this may have been the way that they similarly left an impact on the narrative of Appian (*Ti. Gracch.* 9 and n. 44). Still, scholars these days are inclined to allow that ancient writers read more extensively than used to be assumed, and we cannot exclude the possibility that both authors had seen the speeches.

Another work that may well have been important is the history of Gaius Fannius. We know that it included speeches, including that of Metellus against the Gracchi (*Cic. Brut.* 81: cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 14 and n. 65), and if the brothers' own speeches are taken over at second hand it may have been he that was the intermediary. If we assume, as Plutarch apparently did (*Ti. Gracch.* 4 and n. 24), that the historian was the same man as the politician, he too was a highly committed participant in these events: the trouble was that he was committed in both directions, as a strong supporter of the Gracchi until his consulship of 122 but then as a fierce opponent of Gaius at the end, as Plutarch himself stresses (*C. Gracch.* 8, 11, 12 with n. 60). It would be fascinating to know how Fannius handled so delicate a subject, but at least it seems safe to say that Plutarch did not follow him uncritically: Plutarch's own work does not move to an unsympathetic portrayal of Gaius in his final days, but rather stresses his pacific urgings (*C. Gracch.* 14–17 and *Comp. Agis.–Cleom.–Gracch.* 4) while no reasons are given for Fannius's own volte-face (just 'Fannius's goodwill also began to cool', *C. Gracch.* 8).

There is nothing, then, to suggest that Plutarch's smooth, harmonized and basically consistent portrayal of the two men is anything but his own work, as he drew together and imposed unity on material drawn from disparate sources. We can also be very confident that Plutarch knew that many traditionally minded Romans had taken an extremely dim view of the Gracchi and would have echoed the verdict of Scipio Aemilianus himself: 'So may everyone perish who

chooses to act in this way' (*Ti. Gracch.* 21). Plutarch had almost certainly read a certain amount of Cicero by now (he did so, it seems, when writing *Cicero* itself, one of the earliest of the Parallel Lives: General Intro. III), and would know that Cicero combined admiration for Gaius's eloquence with a damning verdict on his politics;²⁴ the strains of Roman historiography we can trace seem similar, for instance in Livy's talk of 'pernicious proposals', a 'seditious tribunate' and 'craziness' (*furor*).²⁵ Plutarch may well also have read Posidonius. When he himself struck more positive a note, he knew he was singing out of tune, at least out of any tune that conservative Republican Romans would have liked.

TIBERIUS GRACCHUS

[163–133 BCE]

1. Now that I have fulfilled the first part of my task in relating the story of the lives of the Spartan kings Agis and Cleomenes,¹ it remains to consider the equally emotional tale of the Roman pair, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, which I have chosen as a parallel. They were the sons of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, a man who, although he had held the office of censor, served twice as consul and celebrated two triumphs, was even more renowned for his personal character than his achievements.² It was for this reason that, after the death of Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal, even though Tiberius had not been a friend of his and had in fact opposed him in politics, he was nevertheless considered worthy to marry Scipio's daughter Cornelia.³ There is a story⁴ that Tiberius once caught a pair of snakes on his bed and that the augurs, after giving thought to this prodigy, told him that he must neither kill both reptiles nor let both go: their interpretation was that he must deal with each separately, and that if he killed the male serpent this would bring about his own death, if the female, Cornelia's. Gracchus loved his wife, and considered that as he was far advanced in years, while his wife was still young, it was better that he should die, and so he killed the male serpent and let the female escape. He died soon afterwards, leaving Cornelia with twelve children by him.⁵

Cornelia took charge both of the children and of her husband's property, and proved herself a woman of such discretion and noble ideals and so devoted a mother that Tiberius was considered to have made no unreasonable choice in electing to die in place of such a wife. For when Ptolemy,⁶ the king of Egypt, asked for her hand in marriage and invited her to share his crown she refused, and remained a widow. While she was still a widow she lost all her children but three, a daughter who married Scipio Africanus the younger,⁷ and two sons, Tiberius and Gaius, who are the subjects of this book. These boys Cornelia brought up with such care and such ambitious hopes that, although by common consent no Romans have ever been more naturally gifted, they were considered to owe their virtues even more to their education than to their heredity.

2. We notice that the figures of Castor and Pollux, as they are represented in sculpture and painting, show certain differences in their physique, as between the boxer and the runner. It is the same way with these two young Romans: in spite of their strong resemblance to one another in courage and self-discipline as well as in generosity, eloquence and idealism, there also developed some strong contrasts which manifested themselves both in their actions and in their political careers, and it will not be out of place for me to set forth these differences before going farther.

First of all Tiberius was gentle and composed, alike in his cast of features, expression and movement, whereas Gaius was highly strung and impassioned.⁸ Thus, when they addressed the people, Tiberius always spoke in a decorous tone and remained standing in the same position, whereas Gaius was the first Roman to stride up and down the rostra⁹ and wrench his toga off his shoulder, in the same way that Cleon the Athenian is said to have been the first of the demagogues to tear open his cloak and slap his thigh.¹⁰ Gaius's oratory tended to electrify his audience and was impassioned to the point of exaggeration, whereas Tiberius was more conciliatory and appealed to people's sense of pity. Tiberius's style was pure and his language chosen with extreme care, whereas Gaius's was plausible and exuberant. In the same way as regards their table and mode of life, Gaius, although austere if judged by the standards of his other contemporaries, was yet somewhat ostentatious and addicted to new fashions by comparison with his brother. We have some evidence for this in the accusation brought against him by Drusus¹¹ of buying silver dolphins at the price of 1,250 drachmas a pound.¹² The same differences which appeared in their styles of speaking were also reflected in their characters. Tiberius was mild and reasonable, while his brother was harsh and impulsive, and often, against his better judgement, allowed himself to be so far carried away by anger while he was speaking that his voice would rise to a high pitch, he would lapse into abuse and lose the thread of his argument. To guard against such digressions he employed a slave named Licinius, a person of some intelligence, who stood behind him with an instrument which was intended to correct the tones of his voice and give them their proper pitch. Whenever he noticed that Gaius's voice was becoming harsh or broken with anger, he would sound a soft note, and as soon as Gaius heard this he would immediately moderate his passion, tone down his voice and show that his emotions were under control.

3. These were the differences between the two brothers, but in respect of bravery in the face of the enemy, justice in their dealings with the subject-peoples, scrupulous attention to their public duties and

restraint in the pleasures they allowed themselves, both were exactly alike. Tiberius, however, was nine years older than his brother,¹³ which meant that their political careers were separated by an interval, and it was this factor rather than any other which turned out to be the fatal weakness in their undertakings. They did not rise to political prominence at the same time, with the result that their powers were exerted separately, whereas if only they had been combined the effect would have been irresistible.¹⁴ I must therefore describe their careers individually and shall deal with the elder brother first.

4. By the time that Tiberius arrived at manhood, he had already earned such a reputation that he was considered worthy to be elected to a priesthood in the college of augurs,¹⁵ but he owed this distinction to his personal merits rather than his noble birth. This was proved by the action of Appius Claudius, a man who had held the offices of censor and consul,¹⁶ who by reason of his reputation had been given the title of leader of the senate,¹⁷ and who for the loftiness of his spirit surpassed all the Romans of his time. When the augurs held a banquet on the occasion of the young man's election to office, Appius greeted Tiberius warmly, expressed his regard for him and went on to offer him his daughter's hand in marriage. Tiberius gladly accepted and the betrothal was agreed at once. Later when Appius returned home, he called out excitedly to his wife from the doorway where he was standing, 'Antistia, I have betrothed our Claudia!' His wife answered in surprise, 'Why so suddenly? Why are you in such a hurry, unless you have found Tiberius Gracchus for a husband?' I know that some writers relate this story of Tiberius's father and Scipio Africanus,¹⁸ but most of them follow the version which I have given, and Polybius¹⁹ mentions that, after Scipio Africanus's death, Cornelia's relatives chose Tiberius in preference to any other husband and gave her to him in marriage, which indicates that her father had left her unaffianced and unbetrothed.²⁰

Soon afterwards the young Tiberius served for a period in Africa²¹ under Scipio Africanus the younger, who had married his sister.²² There, according to the Roman custom, he shared a tent with his commander,²³ and it was not long before he learned to appreciate Scipio's character. The older man was a model of the soldierly virtues and provided a constant example to imitate and rival these qualities in action. Tiberius soon came to surpass all the young Romans of his age in discipline and courage: indeed he was the first to scale the enemy's wall, according to Fannius,²⁴ who writes that he himself climbed up with Tiberius and shared in the exploit. Tiberius won the affections of many of his comrades while he was with the army and was greatly missed when he returned to Italy.

5. After the Carthaginian war he was elected quaestor,²⁵ and it fell to his lot to serve in the operations against Numantia under the consul Gaius Mancinus,²⁶ a man by no means undeserving in his personal qualities, but perhaps the unluckiest Roman ever to command an army. This meant that, amid the various unexpected misfortunes and military reverses which marked this campaign, Tiberius's courage and intelligence shone out all the more brightly, and not only these qualities but also – which was more admirable still – the respect and honour in which he continued to hold his commander, who, under the weight of successive reverses, reached the stage of barely recognizing whether he was still a general at all. After he had been defeated in several major battles, Mancinus attempted to abandon his camp and withdraw his army by night, but the Numantines discovered his intention and promptly seized his camp, attacked his men as they fled and cut the rearguard to pieces. They then proceeded to encircle his men and drive them on to difficult ground from which there was no escape. By this time Mancinus had given up all hope of breaking through to safety, and he therefore sent envoys to the enemy to propose a truce and arrange terms for a peace; but the Numantines declared that they would trust no Roman except Tiberius²⁷ and demanded that Mancinus should send him. They did this not only out of their regard for Tiberius's personal qualities – for he had a great reputation among the Numantine troops – but also because they remembered his father Tiberius. He had fought against the Spaniards and subdued many of their tribes, but had made a peace with the Numantines and had always ensured that the Roman people kept its terms with the strictest justice.²⁸ So Tiberius was duly sent to confer with the enemy's leaders. He gave way on some points and persuaded them to accept others, and in the end arrived at an agreement which undoubtedly saved the lives of twenty thousand Roman citizens, not to mention their slaves and camp-followers.

6. Nevertheless, the Numantines took possession of all the property which had been left in the camp and treated this as plunder. Among these spoils were Tiberius's ledgers, which contained the written records of his transactions as quaestor, and which he was most anxious to recover. Accordingly, when the Roman army was already well on its way, he went back to Numantia accompanied by three or four of his friends. There he called out the magistrates and asked them to return his tablets, to prevent his enemies from seizing this opportunity to slander his good name because of his inability to account for his administration. The Numantines were delighted that this accident had enabled them to do him a service. They invited him to enter the city, and as he stood considering the matter they came

nearer, clasped his hands and begged him no longer to regard them as enemies but rather as friends whom he could trust. So Tiberius decided to fall in with their wishes, since he was anxious both to recover the tablets²⁹ and also to avoid offending the Numantines by appearing to distrust them. When he entered the city, the Numantines' first action was to set out a meal for him, and they pressed him in the friendliest fashion to sit down and eat with them. Next they returned his ledgers and urged him to take whatever else he wanted from the spoils. Tiberius refused everything, however, except for some incense which he was in the habit of using for public sacrifices, and after saying good-bye with warm expressions of friendship, he took his leave.

7. When he returned to the capital, he found that the whole transaction had aroused a storm of indignation, and was being denounced as a disaster and a disgrace to the name of Rome. On the other hand the relatives and friends of the soldiers, who formed a large proportion of the citizen body, came flocking to Tiberius, blamed the general for everything that was dishonourable in the affair, and insisted that it was through Tiberius's efforts that the lives of so many citizens had been saved. However, those who condemned the conduct of the campaign urged that this was an occasion for the people to follow the precedent set by their ancestors, who had stripped and delivered up to the Samnites those very generals who had been content to buy their safety on dishonourable terms.³⁰ What was more, this punishment had been extended to cover everyone who had taken any part in the terms of surrender, such as the quaestors and military tribunes, and in this way the people had made these officials responsible for the subsequent repudiation and violation of the agreement with the Samnites. But it was on this occasion more than on any other that the people chose to demonstrate their goodwill and affection towards Tiberius. They voted that the consul should be delivered up to the Numantines stripped and in chains, but for Tiberius's sake all the other officers were spared. It appears that Scipio, who at this time was the most powerful and influential man in Rome, also played his part in rescuing them, but in spite of this he was blamed by Tiberius and his friends for not saving Mancinus from punishment,³¹ and also for not insisting that the agreement which his friend and kinsman Tiberius had negotiated with the Numantines was duly ratified.³² It seems most likely that whatever difference arose between the two men was caused by Tiberius's personal ambition, and by the friends and sophists who encouraged him. But certainly this estrangement produced no irreconcilable breach between them, and in my opinion Tiberius would never have suffered the fate which finally

overtook him if Scipio had been in Rome at the time of his political campaign. However, as events turned out, Scipio was already at Numantia and was carrying on the war there when Tiberius brought forward his programme of agrarian reform.³³ The occasion for this was as follows.

8. Whenever the Romans annexed land from their neighbours as a result of their wars, it was their custom to put a part up for sale by auction: the rest was made common land and was distributed among the poorest and most needy of the citizens, who were allowed to cultivate it on payment of a small rent to the public treasury. When the rich began to outbid and drive out the poor by offering higher rentals, a law was passed which forbade any one individual to hold more than 500 *iugera*³⁴ of land. For a while this law restrained the greed of the rich and helped the poor, who were enabled to remain on the land which they had rented, so that each of them could occupy the allotment which he had originally been granted. But after a time the rich men in each neighbourhood contrived to transfer many of these holdings to themselves by using the names of fictitious tenants, and finally they openly took possession of the greater part of the land under their own names. The poor, when they found themselves forced off the land, became less and less willing to volunteer for military service or even to raise a family. The result was that all Italy saw a rapid decline of the class of free small-holders, their place being taken by gangs of foreign slaves, whom the rich employed to cultivate the estates from which they had driven off the free citizens. Scipio's friend Gaius Laelius³⁵ attempted to reform this abuse, but when he found himself opposed by the property-owning class, he took fright at the conflict which his programme seemed likely to arouse and abandoned his efforts, as a result of which he was given the name of 'the wise', or 'the prudent', for the Latin word *sapiens* seems to be able to carry either meaning. Tiberius, on the other hand, went straight to the root of the matter as soon as he had been elected tribune. He was encouraged in his plans, as most writers report, by Diophanes the orator and Blossius the philosopher.³⁶ Diophanes was an exile from Mytilene, but Blossius was a native Italian from Cumae, and had been a close friend of Antipater of Tarsus in the city, who had paid him the honour of dedicating to him some of his philosophical writings. Some writers consider that Cornelia was at least partly to blame, since she often reproached her sons with the fact that the Romans still referred to her as the mother-in-law of Scipio, but not yet as the mother of the Gracchi.³⁷ Others maintain that a certain Spurius Postumius³⁸ was also responsible. This man was of the same age as Tiberius and a close rival as a public speaker. So when Tiberius returned from the

campaign against Numantia and found that his adversary had far outdistanced him in fame and influence and had attracted general admiration, he resolved (so it seems) to outdo him by introducing a bold political programme, which would arouse great expectations among the people. However, his brother Gaius has written in a pamphlet³⁹ that while Tiberius was travelling through Etruria on his way to Numantia, he saw for himself how the country had been deserted by its native inhabitants, and how those who tilled the soil or tended the flocks were barbarian slaves introduced from abroad; and that it was this experience which first inspired the policy that later brought so many misfortunes upon the two brothers. But it was above all the people themselves who did most to arouse Tiberius's energy and ambitions by inscribing slogans and appeals on porticoes, monuments and the walls of houses,⁴⁰ calling upon him to recover the public land for the poor.

9. He did not, however, draft his law by himself, but consulted a number of the most eminent and respected citizens, among them Crassus the Pontifex Maximus,⁴¹ Mucius Scaevola the jurist, who was then consul,⁴² and Appius Claudius who was Tiberius's own father-in-law.⁴³ And certainly many will agree that no law directed against wrongdoing and avarice was ever framed in milder or more conciliatory terms. For the men who deserved to be punished for breaking the law, and who should have been fined as well as obliged to surrender the land which they had been illegally enjoying, were merely required to give up their unjust acquisitions – for which they were compensated – and to allow the ownership to pass to those citizens who needed help. But even though this act of restitution showed such tenderness for the wrongdoers, the people were content to forget the past so long as they could be assured of protection against injustice for the future. The wealthy classes and the landowners, on the other hand, were bitterly opposed to these proceedings: they hated the law out of sheer greed, and its originator out of personal resentment and party prejudice, and they did their utmost to turn the people against the reform by alleging that what Tiberius was proposing amounted to land-redistribution, and that he was undermining the foundations of the state and stirring up a general revolution.

However, these tactics achieved nothing. Tiberius was fighting for a measure which was honourable and just in itself, and he was able to summon up an eloquence which would have done credit to a far less worthy cause. The result was that whenever he mounted the rostra and pleaded the case of the poor with the people crowding around him to listen, the effect of his words was overwhelming and no other

orator could stand against him.

‘The wild beasts that roam over Italy,’ he would tell his listeners, ‘have their dens and holes to lurk in, but the men who fight and die for our country enjoy the common air and light and nothing else. It is their lot to wander with their wives and children, houseless and homeless, over the face of the earth. And when our generals appeal to their soldiers before a battle to defend their ancestors’ tombs and their temples against the enemy, their words are a lie and a mockery, for not a man in their audience possesses a family altar; not one out of all those Romans owns an ancestral tomb. The truth is that they fight and die to protect the wealth and luxury of others. They are called the masters of the world, but they do not possess a single clod of earth which is truly their own.’⁴⁴

10. To such oratory as this, the utterance of a noble spirit, delivered with genuine passion to a people profoundly moved and fully aroused to the speaker’s support, none of Tiberius’s adversaries could make an effective reply. So they abandoned any attempt to oppose him by argument and sought the help of Marcus Octavius,⁴⁵ one of the tribunes of the people, a serious young man of steady character, discreet and a close friend of Tiberius. For this reason Octavius at first declined their advances out of regard for Tiberius, but in the end the unremitting pressure of so many powerful and influential men proved too much for him, and so he set himself to oppose Tiberius and found means to obstruct the passage of the law. Now, in this situation the decisive power rests with the dissentient tribune; for if a single tribune interposes his veto, the wishes of the rest are of no avail.⁴⁶ These tactics angered Tiberius, and he thereupon withdrew his conciliatory law and introduced one which was more gratifying to the people and harsher to the illegal owners of land: it simply demanded that they should vacate the land which they had acquired in defiance of the earlier laws.⁴⁷

So day after day the two speakers fought out this issue on the rostra, but although each exerted his powers of expression to the utmost in the effort to defeat his opponent, neither, we are told, ever resorted to abuse, nor in the heat of passion let fall a word of disparagement of the other. For it is not only in the midst of Bacchic orgies, as Euripides writes,⁴⁸ but in the control of personal ambitions and passions that a noble nature and a sound upbringing serve to compose and govern the mind. Moreover, when Tiberius learned that Octavius was himself affected by the law as the owner of large tracts of public land, he begged him to withdraw his opposition and offered to pay Octavius the value of his holding out of his own resources, although he was by no means a rich man. But Octavius refused his

offer, whereupon Tiberius issued an edict prohibiting all the other magistrates from transacting any public business until the people had cast their vote either for or against his law. He also placed his private seal on the Temple of Saturn⁴⁹ so as to prevent the quaestors from drawing money out of the treasury or paying it in: at the same time he gave public notice that a penalty would be imposed upon any praetor who disobeyed the edict. The result of this was to alarm the magistrates so much that they suspended all their various functions.⁵⁰ The response of the property-owning faction was to dress themselves in mourning and walk about in the forum with a dejected appearance calculated to arouse compassion, but at the same time they secretly formed a conspiracy against Tiberius and hired a band of cut-throats to assassinate him. Tiberius for his part – and this became common knowledge – took to wearing a dagger under his toga, of the kind which is used by robbers and is known as a *dolon*.

11. When the appointed day arrived and Tiberius was summoning the people to cast their votes, the party of the rich seized the voting urns,⁵¹ and the whole proceedings were thrown into confusion. However, Tiberius's supporters were numerous enough to force the issue and they were mustering their strength to do this when Manlius and Fulvius, two men of consular rank,⁵² fell on their knees before Tiberius, clasped his hands, and tearfully implored him to stop. Tiberius sensed that the situation had now reached a crisis, and out of respect for two such distinguished men asked them what they wished him to do. They replied that they had no competence to advise on so important a matter, but they earnestly entreated him to refer the whole problem to the senate, and to this proposal Tiberius agreed.

However, the meeting of the senate produced no solution because the rich were able to dominate the proceedings, and so Tiberius, since he could find no other way of putting his law to the vote, resorted to a measure which was neither constitutional nor appropriate:⁵³ he had Octavius deprived of his tribuneship. But before taking this action, he addressed Octavius in affectionate terms, clasped his hands, and pleaded with him in public to give way and gratify the wishes of the people, who after all were demanding nothing more than their just rights, and who would receive little enough in return for the dangers and sufferings which they endured to protect the state. Finally when Octavius rejected his appeal, Tiberius told him that, since they were colleagues in office who possessed equal authority but found themselves opposed on matters of vital importance, it was impossible for them to complete their term of office without an open conflict, and that he could see only one remedy for this situation, namely for one or the other to cease holding his position. He urged Octavius that the

people should first give their vote on his own case, and promised that he would immediately retire into private life, if this was what the citizens desired. But Octavius rejected this proposal too, whereupon Tiberius announced that he would allow the people to vote on Octavius, unless his opponent were to change his mind after reflection.

12. Upon this understanding he dissolved the assembly, but on the following day, when the people had gathered again, he mounted the rostra and made yet another attempt to persuade Octavius. Finally, when his opponent still remained immovable, Tiberius proposed a motion depriving Octavius of his tribuneship and called upon the citizens to cast their votes at once. Now, there were thirty-five tribes,⁵⁴ and when seventeen of them had voted and the addition of one more would compel Octavius to become a private citizen once again, Tiberius stopped the voting and once more appealed to his opponent, throwing his arms around him, kissing him in full view of the people and fervently entreating him not to allow himself to suffer this humiliation, nor to oblige his fellow-tribune to incur the blame for introducing so extreme and odious a measure.

We are told that Octavius could not remain unmoved as he listened to this entreaty: his eyes filled with tears, and for a long while he did not utter a word. But presently when he looked up towards the rich men and landowners, who stood solidly grouped together, his awe of them and fear of losing their good opinion hardened his resolve, and he decided to risk the worst – there was some nobility in his stance – and to tell Tiberius that he must do as he pleased. Accordingly the motion was passed, and Tiberius then ordered one of his freedmen to drag Octavius from the rostra. He was in the habit of employing his own freedmen instead of the public officers, and this made the sight of Octavius being ignominiously dragged along even more distressing. Worse still, the people then made a rush at the prisoner, and although his wealthy sympathizers ran together to his help and spread out their hands to protect him, it was only with great difficulty that Octavius was pulled away and rescued from the mob. At the same time a faithful slave, who had planted himself in front of his master to protect him, had his eyes torn out in spite of the efforts of Tiberius, who as soon as he grasped what was happening came running down and did his utmost to restrain the rioters.

13. After this, Tiberius's agrarian law was passed, and three men were appointed to survey and distribute the public land. These were Tiberius himself, Appius Claudius his father-in-law and Gaius Gracchus his brother, who was not at that time in Rome, but was serving under Scipio in the campaign against the Numantines.⁵⁵

Tiberius succeeded in carrying through all these measures peacefully and without opposition, and in addition he secured the election of a new tribune to replace Octavius. This man did not belong to any of the distinguished families: he was merely one of Tiberius's clients whose name was Mucius.⁵⁶ The propertied classes, however, who were angered by all these measures and were becoming alarmed at the growth of Tiberius's power, took every opportunity of insulting him in the senate. When he asked for a tent, which was normally provided at the public expense, for his work in dividing up the land, they refused to approve his request, although other men had often been granted this facility for much less urgent reasons, and in the same way his daily allowance for expenses was fixed at 9 obols.⁵⁷ The chief promoter of these affronts was Publius Nasica,⁵⁸ who now abandoned himself completely to his hatred of Tiberius: he was one of the largest owners of public lands and felt bitterly resentful at being obliged to give them up.

These actions had the effect of enraging the people all the more, so that when a friend of Tiberius died suddenly and malignant spots appeared all over his body, the rumour spread that he had been poisoned. A huge crowd swiftly gathered to attend his funeral, and the people carried the bier on their shoulders and stood by to witness the last ceremonies. And here indeed it seemed that their worst suspicions were confirmed. For the corpse burst open and discharged such a mass of corrupt matter that the funeral pyre was completely extinguished. When it was fit again, the body still would not burn until it had been removed to another place, and it was only after a great deal of effort that the flames could be made to take hold. Thereupon Tiberius, who wished to stir up the people's anger still further, dressed himself in mourning,⁵⁹ brought his two children⁶⁰ before the assembly and implored the people to take care of them and of their mother, thus implying that he had given up his own life for lost.

14. Soon after this King Attalus Philometor⁶¹ died, and Eudemus of Pergamum brought to Rome his last will and testament, in which the Roman people were named as his heirs. Tiberius at once made a bid for popularity by introducing a law which provided that when King Attalus's money arrived in Rome, it should be distributed among those citizens who had received allotments of public land so as to help them stock and cultivate their farms. As for the cities which lay within the bounds of Attalus's kingdom, Tiberius declared that the senate had no right to decide their destiny, but that he himself would submit a plan to the people on this subject. No proposal could have been better calculated to give offence to the senate,⁶² and when Pompeius⁶³ rose to speak he asserted that he was a neighbour of Tiberius and therefore

knew that Eudemus of Pergamum had chosen a diadem⁶⁴ and a purple robe out of the royal treasures, and presented them to him in the expectation that he would soon become king of Rome. Quintus Metellus⁶⁵ also reproached Tiberius by reminding him that whenever the elder Gracchus, his father, was returning home after a supper while he was censor,⁶⁶ the citizens of Rome would put out their lights, so that there should be no suspicion that they were indulging beyond reason in entertainments or drinking-bouts. Tiberius, by contrast, was constantly lighted on his way at night by the poorest and rowdiest elements among the people. Titus Annius⁶⁷ also joined in the debate. He enjoyed no great reputation either for uprightness of character or for moderation, but was regarded as unrivalled for his debating skill in question and answer, and he now challenged Tiberius to a judicial wager; he contended that by deposing Octavius, Tiberius had committed an act of contempt against the person of his fellow-tribune, which by law was sacred and inviolable. This speech was loudly applauded by many of the senators, whereupon Tiberius rushed out of the senate-house, summoned a meeting of the assembly and ordered Annius to be brought before the people with the intention of denouncing him. However, Annius, who knew that he was no match for Tiberius either in reputation or as an orator, took refuge in the technique of which he was a master and called upon Tiberius to answer a few questions before the argument began. Tiberius agreed and after silence had been restored, Annius formulated this question: 'Let us assume that you wish to deprive me of my position and heap insults upon me, that I appeal to one of your colleagues in office, that he mounts the rostra to defend me, and that you then fly into a passion. Will you then deprive him of his office?' Tiberius, we are told, was so disconcerted by this question that although normally no man was quicker in repartee or bolder in action, yet on this occasion he could make no reply.

15. For the present, then, he dissolved the assembly. At the same time he saw clearly that his treatment of Octavius had offended not only the men of influence but even the people, since it was generally felt that the tribunate was invested with a peculiar stature and dignity, which until that day had been jealously preserved but had now been violated and destroyed. He therefore delivered a long speech to the people,⁶⁸ and it will not be out of place to recapitulate a few of his arguments here, so as to indicate something of Tiberius's subtlety and powers of persuasion. He declared that a tribune was sacred and inviolable because he was dedicated to the people and stood as their protector. 'But,' he went on, 'if a tribune should depart from his duty, treat the people wrongly, cripple its powers and take away its right to

vote, he has by his own actions deprived himself of his honourable office by not fulfilling the conditions upon which he accepted it. Otherwise we should be obliged to allow a tribune the freedom even to demolish the Capitol or burn down the naval arsenal. If a tribune commits such actions as these he is still a tribune, even though a bad one, but if he annuls the powers of the people, he ceases to be a tribune at all. Is it not a flagrant contradiction, then, that a tribune should have power to send a consul to prison, while the people are unable to remove a tribune from authority, even when he uses it against the very men who put it in his hands: for remember that consuls and tribunes are both elected by the people. Now, the office of king not only embraces within itself every kind of authority, but kings are also consecrated to the gods by having to perform the most important religious ceremonies. Yet in spite of this, when Tarquin acted wrongfully, the Roman state expelled him,⁶⁹ and because of the lawless action of one man the ancestral form of government, to which Rome owes her foundation, was abolished for ever. Again, is there anything so sacred or so venerable in all Rome as the order of Vestal Virgins who tend and watch over the undying fire? Yet if one of these breaks her vows, she is buried alive, for when they sin against the gods, they forfeit that inviolable sanctity which they possess on account of their service to the gods. In the same way a tribune who infringes the rights of the people has no just claim to retain the immunity which is granted to him for his services to the people, since he is destroying the very power which is the foundation of his own. And surely if it is legal for him to be elected to his office by a majority vote of the tribes, then it must be still more so for him to be deprived of it by a unanimous vote. Again, nothing is so sacred and inviolable as an offering which has been consecrated to the gods, but the people have never been prohibited from making use of them, or from moving or changing their position as they may choose. Accordingly, on this principle, it is legal for the people to transfer the tribunate, just as it is to transfer a sacred offering, from one person to another. Moreover, it is a fact that on many occasions men have resigned from the tribunate after taking an oath of disability, or have asked of their own free will to be relieved of their responsibilities, and from this it follows that it is not an inviolable institution, nor an office of which a man cannot be deprived.'

16. These were the principal arguments which Tiberius brought forward in defence of his action. Meanwhile, his friends had taken note of the threats and the organized opposition which was gathering against him: they considered that he must be elected tribune again for the following year,⁷⁰ and so once more Tiberius set out to strengthen

his position among the people by introducing a series of new measures.⁷¹ These included a reduction of the period of military service,⁷² the right of appeal to the people from the verdicts of the juries and the admission to the juries – which had hitherto been composed exclusively of senators – of an equal number of knights.⁷³ In short, Tiberius's programme was designed to cripple the power of the senate in every possible way, and it was inspired by motives of anger and party politics rather than by considerations of justice and the common good. While the voting was in progress it became clear to Tiberius's friends that their opponents would gain a majority, since many of the people could not be present.⁷⁴ So first of all they began to play for time by delivering speeches abusing Tiberius's fellow-tribunes, and next they dissolved the assembly and adjourned the meeting until the following day.

Tiberius then went down into the forum and pleaded with the citizens in a humble tone and with tears in his eyes. He went on to tell them that he was afraid that his enemies would break into his house at night and kill him, and in this way he touched the emotions of his audience so powerfully that many of them encamped outside his house and spent the night there on guard.

17. At daybreak there arrived at the house the man who brought the birds which the Romans use to take the auspices. He threw food in front of them, but with one exception the birds refused to leave their cage, although the keeper shook the bars vigorously; and the one which ventured outside would not touch its food, but merely lifted its left wing, stretched out a leg and retired again into the cage. This episode reminded Tiberius of another which had taken place earlier. He possessed a helmet which he had won in battle, a splendid and elaborately chased piece of armour. Some snakes had crawled into this unobserved, laid their eggs and hatched them out, and this made Tiberius still more uneasy about the signs from the birds. However, when he heard that the people were assembled on the Capitol he set out, but as he was leaving the house he stumbled against the threshold. He struck his foot so violently that the nail of his big toe was split, and the blood ran out through his sandal. He had not gone far before some crows were seen fighting on the roof of a house to the left, and although many people were passing by, as was natural, a stone dislodged by one of the crows fell on Tiberius's own foot. This made even the boldest of his followers hesitate. Nevertheless Blossius of Cumae,⁷⁵ who was with him, declared that it would be a shame and an unbearable humiliation if Tiberius, a son of Gracchus, a grandson of Scipio Africanus and a champion of the Roman people, should fail to answer his fellow-citizens' call for help because he was afraid of a

raven: besides, his enemies would say that this disgrace was no laughing matter, and would seize the opportunity to denounce him to the people as a man who was now playing the tyrant⁷⁶ and treating them with contempt. At this moment a group of people ran up with a message from his friends on the Capitol, who urged him to hurry there, as events were now going in his favour. And indeed at first everything that he found there was splendid. As soon as the crowd saw him they raised a welcoming cheer, and as he climbed the hill they greeted him enthusiastically and gathered around him to prevent any stranger from approaching.

18. However, when Mucius⁷⁷ began once again to summon the tribes to the vote, it was impossible to carry out the usual procedure because of a disturbance which had arisen on the outskirts of the crowd, where Tiberius's opponents were trying to force their way in and mingle with the rest, and his supporters were pushing and jostling against them. At this moment Fulvius Flaccus,⁷⁸ a senator, climbed into a conspicuous position, and, since he could not make his voice heard at such a distance, he gesticulated with his hand to indicate that he wanted to say something in private to Tiberius. The latter called upon the crowd to make way for Flaccus, who with great difficulty struggled towards Tiberius and warned him that the senate was sitting, that the rich were plotting to kill Tiberius themselves since they could not persuade the consul⁷⁹ to do so and that they had armed a large number of their followers and slaves for this purpose.

19. Tiberius passed on this news to his supporters who were standing round him, and they at once girded up their togas. Then they broke up the staves which the officers use to keep back the crowd, distributed these and prepared to defend themselves against their attackers. Those who were standing farther away were at a loss to know what was happening and asked what it meant. Thereupon, Tiberius raised his hand to his head intending, since the people could not hear his voice, to signify that his life was in danger. But when his enemies saw this gesture, they rushed to the senate and reported that Tiberius was asking for a diadem, and that they had evidence of this in the way he had just touched his head. This created an uproar in the senate, and Nasica⁸⁰ demanded that the consul⁸¹ must now act to protect the state and put down the tyrant. The consul answered in conciliatory fashion that he would not be the first to use violence, and would put no citizen to death without a trial. On the other hand he declared that, if Tiberius should incite or oblige the people to pass any illegal resolution, he would not consider it to be binding. At this, Nasica sprang to his feet and shouted, 'Now that the consul has betrayed the state, let every man who wishes to uphold the laws follow me!' Then

he drew the skirt of his toga over his head⁸² and strode out towards the Capitol. The senators who followed him wrapped their togas over their left arms and thrust aside anyone who stood in their path. Nobody dared to oppose them out of respect for their rank, but those whom they met took to their heels and trampled down one another as they fled.

The senators' followers were armed with clubs and staves which they had brought from their houses. The senators themselves snatched up the legs and fragments of the benches which the crowd had broken in their hurry to escape, and made straight for Tiberius, lashing out at those who were drawn up in front of him. His protectors were quickly scattered or clubbed down, and as Tiberius turned to run, someone caught hold of his clothing. He threw off his toga and fled in his tunic, but then stumbled over some of the prostrate bodies in front of him. As he struggled to his feet, one of his fellow-tribunes, Publius Satureius, as everybody agrees, dealt the first blow, striking him on the head with the leg of a bench. Lucius Rufus claimed to have given him the second, and prided himself upon this as if it were some noble exploit.⁸³ More than three hundred men were killed by blows from sticks and stones, but none by the sword.

20. This is said to have been the first outbreak of civil strife in Rome that was decided by the bloodshed and death of citizens⁸⁴ since the expulsion of the kings. All the other disputes, although they were neither trivial in themselves nor concerned with trivial objects, were resolved by some form of compromise, with the senate making concessions through fear of the people and the people out of respect for the senate. Even on this occasion it was generally believed that Tiberius would have given way without difficulty if his opponents had attempted to persuade him, and that once he was attacked he would have surrendered without any need for violence or bloodshed, since his supporters at that time did not number more than three thousand. But the conspiracy which was formed against him seems to have had its origin in the hatred and malevolence of the rich rather than in the excuses which they put forward for their action: at any rate the brutal and lawless fashion in which Tiberius's enemies treated his dead body certainly points to this conclusion. They refused his brother's request for permission to take up the body and bury it at night:⁸⁵ instead they threw it into the Tiber together with the rest of the dead.⁸⁶ And this was not all. Some of Tiberius's supporters were banished without a trial, while others were arrested and executed, Diophanes⁸⁷ the rhetorician among them. A certain Gaius Villius was shut up in a vessel with vipers and other poisonous snakes and put to death in this way.⁸⁸ Blossius⁸⁹ of Cumae was brought before the consuls, and when

he was questioned concerning his part in the events, he answered that he had acted in every instance on Tiberius's orders. At this Nasica asked him, 'What would you have done then if Tiberius had ordered you to set fire to the Capitol?' Blossius replied at first that Tiberius would never have given such an order, but when the same question was put to him time after time by his interrogators, he answered, 'If Tiberius had given such an order, then it would have been right for me to carry it out, for he would never have done such a thing unless it were for the good of the people.'

At any rate, Blossius was acquitted and afterwards attached himself to the party of Aristonicus in Asia;⁹⁰ later, when Aristonicus's cause collapsed, he committed suicide.

21. After these events the senate made an effort to conciliate the people. They allowed the distribution of public land to proceed, and proposed that the people should elect a new commissioner to succeed Tiberius. A ballot was taken and the choice fell on Publius Crassus,⁹¹ who was related to the Gracchi, for his daughter Licinia was Gaius's wife. Cornelius Nepos maintains⁹² that Gaius's wife was not Licinia, but the daughter of that Brutus who was awarded a triumph over the Lusitanians,⁹³ but most writers agree with the account that I have given. Meanwhile, the people were still deeply aggrieved at the murder of Tiberius, and it was clear that they were only awaiting an opportunity to fight back. Nasica was already threatened with impeachment, and the senate became so alarmed for his safety that they passed a resolution to send him to Asia,⁹⁴ although they had nothing for him to do there. Whenever he appeared in public, people made no attempt to conceal their loathing, but shouted and hurled abuse at him: they called him a tyrant who carried a curse on his head, and had defiled the most hallowed and awe-inspiring sanctuary in Rome with the blood of a man whose person should have been sacred and inviolable. So Nasica left Italy secretly, in spite of the fact that he had the most important and sacred duties to keep him there,⁹⁵ for he held the highest and greatest of the priesthoods.⁹⁶ He wandered from place to place, a despised outcast, and not long afterwards died at Pergamum.

But we need hardly be surprised that such hatred should have been felt for Nasica, when even Scipio Africanus the Younger,⁹⁷ who seems to have been as deeply and as justly beloved by the Roman people as any man in their history, came near to losing their affection on Tiberius's account: the reason for this was first of all that when the news of Tiberius's death reached him at Numantia, he exclaimed, in Homer's words:

So may everyone perish who chooses to act in this way,⁹⁸ and

secondly that, when at a later date Gaius and Fulvius⁹⁹ asked him before the assembly what he thought of Tiberius's fate, his answer left no doubt that he disapproved of the dead man's policies.¹⁰⁰ This so much angered the people that they began to shout interruptions while he was speaking, a thing which they had never done before, and Scipio in his turn was provoked into abusing his audience. All this I have described in greater detail in my *Life of Scipio*.¹⁰¹

GAIUS GRACCHUS

[154 or 153–121 BCE]

1 (22). After his brother's death Gaius Gracchus at first withdrew completely from the forum and played no part in public life. He may have been afraid of his political enemies, or he may have wished to make them appear still more detestable. At any rate, he stayed quietly at home, like a man who had been humbled for the present, and who intended for the future to remain aloof from political life. Indeed, some people even went so far as to attack him on the grounds that he disapproved of Tiberius's policy and had abandoned it. But it must also be said that he was still scarcely more than a boy,¹ since he was nine years younger than Tiberius, who had not reached thirty when he died. But as time went on his character gradually revealed itself. He had no inclination for a life of idleness, nor for effete amusements, nor for the pleasures of the table, nor was he interested in making money.² But by developing his powers of oratory, as if these were the wings which would carry him to the heights of public life, he clearly showed that he had no intention of remaining inactive. And when a friend of his named Vettius³ had to stand his trial and Gaius undertook his defence, the force of his eloquence aroused the people to an ecstatic, almost Dionysiac⁴ enthusiasm and made the efforts of the other pleaders appear quite childish by comparison. So the long dormant fears of the men of power revived once more, and there was much anxious talk to the effect that they would prevent Gaius from becoming a tribune.

However, it now fell to his lot, quite by chance, to be sent to Sardinia as quaestor to the consul Orestes.⁵ Gaius's enemies were delighted and he himself was by no means displeased. He enjoyed military service and was certainly quite as well trained for it as for speaking in the courts. And although he was still nervous about embarking upon a political career and appearing on the rostra, he found it impossible to resist the appeals of his friends and of the people that he should enter public life, and he therefore welcomed this opportunity to leave the city. Yet in spite of these facts it is often alleged that Gaius was an out-and-out demagogue, who was far more shameless in playing for the good opinion of the masses than his brother Tiberius had ever been. The truth is quite different, namely

that Gaius seems to have been drawn into public life by necessity rather than choice. We also have the testimony of Cicero the orator,⁶ who says that Gaius had begun by shunning any prospect of office and had decided to live in retirement, when his brother appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Why do you delay, Gaius? There is no escape. Fate has decreed the same destiny for us both, to live and die in the service of the people.'

2 (23). Once in Sardinia, Gaius soon proved his merits in many different fields.⁷ He surpassed all his contemporaries not only in operations against the enemy and in just dealings with the subject-peoples, but also in the loyalty and respect which he showed towards his commander, while in self-restraint, frugality and attention to his duties he excelled even his seniors. The winter in Sardinia was severe and unhealthy for the army, and the Roman commander requisitioned clothing for his troops from the local cities, whereupon the inhabitants sent a petition to Rome begging that they should be relieved of this imposition. The senate granted their plea and ordered the general to find some other method of providing for his men. The general was at a loss and meanwhile the soldiers were suffering acutely from the cold, so Gaius Gracchus made a tour of the cities himself and persuaded them of their own free will to send clothing and relieve the army's plight. This action was duly reported to Rome and alarmed the senate, who supposed that it marked the beginning of another attempt to win the support of the masses. So, first of all, when a delegation arrived from King Micipsa of Numidia⁸ with the news that because of his regard for Gaius Gracchus he had sent a consignment of grain to the Roman commander in Sardinia, the senators took offence and refused to receive the envoys. Secondly, they passed a decree that fresh troops should be sent out to relieve those who were serving in Sardinia, but that Orestes should continue at his post, the object of this arrangement being to ensure that Gaius would also be kept there because of his office. Gaius was enraged when he learned of this, and immediately embarked for Rome.⁹ When he appeared there unexpectedly, not only did his enemies attack him, but even the people thought it strange that he, a quaestor,¹⁰ should have abandoned his post before his commander. However, when Gaius was accused before the censors, he asked for permission to defend himself, and so completely won over the sympathies of his hearers that by the time he left the court they were convinced that he had been grossly maligned. He pointed out that he had served in the army for no less than twelve years, although other men were obliged to serve for only ten,¹¹ and that he had served his commander for more than two years as quaestor, although the law allowed him to return after one. He also

claimed that he was the only man in the army who had brought out a full purse with him, and taken it back empty. The rest of his comrades had drunk up the wine jars which they took out with them to Sardinia, and brought them back to Rome crammed with gold and silver.¹²

3 (24). After this his enemies laid further accusations and indictments against him: they charged him with having incited the Italian allies to revolt, and with having taken part in the conspiracy which had been exposed at Fregellae.¹³ Here again Gaius was able to clear himself completely, and once he had proved his innocence he immediately began to campaign for election as tribune. All the most distinguished men in Rome without exception joined forces to oppose him, but such an immense multitude poured into the city from various parts of Italy to support his candidature that many of them could find no lodging;¹⁴ and since the Campus Martius was too small to hold them, they climbed up to the attics and housetops to shout out their support for Gaius.¹⁵ In spite of this the men of power were so far successful in imposing their will on the people and frustrating Gaius's hopes that he was not returned first as he expected, but fourth in the poll. But once he had taken up office, he quickly asserted his predominance over the other tribunes, for he was incomparably the finest orator in Rome, and the grief he had suffered encouraged him to speak out fearlessly whenever he lamented the fate of his brother. He seized every occasion to lead the people back to this subject and to remind them of what had happened to Tiberius. In particular he contrasted their cowardly behaviour with the actions of their ancestors, when the latter had declared war on the people of Falerii for the sake of the tribune Genucius¹⁶ who had been insulted by them, or when on another occasion they had condemned Gaius Veturius to death, because he was the only man who had refused to make way for a tribune as he was passing through the forum.¹⁷ 'But you stood by and watched,' he told them, 'while these men beat Tiberius to death with clubs, and while his dead body was dragged through the midst of the city to be thrown into the Tiber. And afterwards those of his friends who were caught were put to death without a trial. And yet it is a long-established custom among us that, if any man is charged with a capital offence and does not answer the summons, then a trumpeter must go to the door of his house in the morning and summon him forth by the sound of the trumpet, and not until this has been done are the jurors permitted to vote upon his case. These were the kind of safeguards and precautions which our ancestors believed to be necessary when a citizen's life was at stake.'¹⁸

4 (25). After he had roused the people's emotions with sentiments

such as these – and he possessed a powerful voice and was an overwhelmingly forceful speaker – Gaius Gracchus proceeded to introduce two laws. The first laid it down that if the people had deposed any magistrate from his position, this man should be disqualified from holding any further office, while the second empowered the people to prosecute any magistrate who had banished a citizen without trial.¹⁹ The first of these was clearly aimed at disqualifying Marcus Octavius, whom Tiberius had deposed from the tribunate,²⁰ while the second affected Popillius Laenas, who as praetor had banished Tiberius's supporters.²¹ Popillius made no attempt to stand his trial, and immediately fled from Italy, but the first law was revoked by Gaius himself, who declared that he had spared Octavius at the request of his mother Cornelia.²² This action pleased the people and they gave their consent to the withdrawal of the measure, for they honoured Cornelia just as much for her sons as they did for her father. Later on they erected a bronze statue of her with the inscription 'Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi'.²³ Some of Gaius's phrases have come down to us from an occasion on which he was attacking one of his enemies in the forceful and coarse style which he used in the forum. 'What is this? Do you dare to insult Cornelia, the mother of Tiberius?' And since the man who had uttered the abuse was suspected of being a homosexual, Gaius went on, 'You have a nerve to compare yourself with Cornelia. Have you borne any children like hers? At any rate, everyone in Rome knows that you have slept with a man far more recently than she has!' Gaius was never squeamish in his choice of words, and there are plenty of similar examples to be found in his writings.²⁴

5 (26). He now introduced a number of laws which he hoped would not only find favour with the people, but would also undermine the authority of the senate.²⁵ One of these established colonial settlements, and divided up the public lands among the poor citizens.²⁶ Another related to the army, and laid it down that soldiers should be supplied with clothing at the public expense without any corresponding deduction being made from their pay, and that nobody should be conscripted below the age of seventeen.²⁷ Yet another was devoted to the allies, and extended to the Italians the same voting rights as were already enjoyed by Roman citizens.²⁸ A fourth dealt with supplies of grain and reduced the price at which it was to be sold to the poor,²⁹ while the fifth regulated the appointment of jurymen.³⁰ It was this law which did more than any other to reduce the power of the senate. Up to this date only senators had been entitled to serve as jurors in criminal cases and it was this privilege above all which had made them feared both by the common people and by the equestrian

order. The effect of Gaius's law was to add to the three hundred members of the senate a further three hundred drawn from the equestrian order and to arrange that juries should be drawn from the whole six hundred.³¹ Gaius is said to have made even more strenuous efforts than usual to secure the passage of this law. But what was especially noticeable in his campaign was that, whereas in the past all popular leaders, whenever they rose to speak, had turned their faces towards the senate-house and the part of the forum which is known as the Comitium, he now created a new precedent by turning, whenever he addressed the people, towards the forum proper, and he made a regular habit of this procedure.³² Thus, by a slight change of posture and deviation from the normal practice, he raised an issue of immense importance and in a sense transferred the whole character of Roman politics from an aristocratic to a democratic basis; for what his action really implied was that orators should address themselves to the people and not to the senate.³³

6 (27). The people not only passed this law, but also charged Gaius with the selection of the jurors who were to be drawn from the equestrian order, so that he found himself invested with almost monarchical powers,³⁴ and even the senate had to put up with patiently listening to his advice. But whenever he gave this, it was always to support measures which reflected credit on that body, as for instance the extremely reasonable and honourable resolution which was passed on the subject of the corn sent by Quintus Fabius,³⁵ the propraetor from Spain. Gaius prevailed upon the senate to sell the corn and return the money to the cities which had originally supplied it, and, not content with this, he had Fabius censured for making the authority of Rome intolerably oppressive to a subject-people. This decree, besides making Gaius popular in the provinces, added greatly to his reputation.

He also introduced legislation which provided for the founding of colonies,³⁶ the construction of roads³⁷ and the establishment of public granaries.³⁸ He himself acted as director and supervisor of every project, and never flagged for a moment in the execution of so many different and elaborate undertakings. On the contrary, he carried out each of them with an extraordinary speed and power of application, as if each concern were the only one he had to manage, so that even those who disliked and feared him most were amazed at his efficiency and his capacity to carry through every enterprise to which he set his hand. As for the people, the very sight of Gaius never failed to impress them, as they watched him attended by a host of contractors, craftsmen, ambassadors, magistrates, soldiers and men of letters, all of whom he handled with a courteous ease which enabled him to show

kindness to all his associates without sacrificing his dignity, and to give every man the consideration that was his due. In this way he gave the clearest possible proof that those who had represented him as a threatening, overbearing or violent man were uttering nothing but malicious slanders. He was in fact an even more effective popular leader in his personal dealings with men and his handling of business than he was in his speeches from the rostra.

7 (28). The construction of roads was the task into which he threw himself most enthusiastically, and he took great pains to ensure that these should be graceful and beautiful as well as useful. His roads were planned so as to run right across the country in a straight line, part of the surface consisting of dressed stone and part of tamped-down gravel. Depressions were filled up, any watercourses or ravines which crossed the line of the road were bridged and both sides of the road were levelled or embanked to the same height, so that the whole of the work presented a beautiful and symmetrical appearance. Besides this he had every road measured in miles – the Roman mile is a little less than eight Greek stades – and stone pillars erected to mark the distances. Other stones were set up at shorter intervals on both sides of the road so that horsemen should be able to mount from these without help.

8 (29). These services won him the wholehearted devotion of the people, and they were prepared to do almost anything in the world to show their goodwill. One day he mentioned in a speech that he intended to ask a favour of them, which he would value beyond words if they would grant it, though he would bear no ill will if they refused. Most people interpreted this as an allusion to the consulship, and expected that he would offer himself for election to the tribunate and the consulship at the same time. But when the consular elections were at hand and everyone was in a fever of anticipation that he would announce his candidature, he appeared leading Gaius Fannius³⁹ into the Campus Martius and canvassed on his behalf together with Fannius's friends. This action turned the scale in Fannius's favour. He was duly elected consul and Gaius tribune for the second time,⁴⁰ even though he had not presented himself as a candidate and did not campaign for office: he owed his election, in fact, entirely to the people's enthusiasm.⁴¹

However, it soon became apparent that the senate was uncompromisingly opposed to him, and when Fannius's goodwill also began to cool, Gaius devised a new series of laws to rally the people to his side. In particular he proposed that new colonies should be founded at Tarentum and Capua⁴² and that the full rights and privileges of Roman citizens should now be extended to the Latins.⁴³ It

was at this point that the senate, in their fear that Gaius's influence would soon become irresistible, resorted to new and unconventional tactics in an effort to detach the people's support. They now adopted the method of competing with Gaius for the favour of the masses and granting their wishes regardless of the best interests of the state.

One of Gaius's colleagues in the tribunate was Livius Drusus.⁴⁴ This was a man who possessed all the advantages of birth and upbringing, and who, in strength of character, in wealth and oratorical power, could compete with those who had raised themselves by such gifts to the highest and most honoured positions in the state. Accordingly, the aristocrats approached him and invited him to attack Gaius and join forces with them in opposing him. Their plan was that he should on no account resort to violence nor risk any open clash with the people, but rather use his power to please them and grant concessions when it would have been more honourable to incur unpopularity by refusing them.

9 (30). So Livius agreed to work for these objects and use his powers as tribune to serve the senate's interests. He then proceeded to draw up laws in a way that was neither creditable in itself nor beneficial to the community, since his sole object – like the rival demagogues in a comedy⁴⁵ – was to outbid his opponent in flattering and gratifying the people. All this clearly indicated that the senate did not disapprove of Gaius's policy in itself, but that it would stop at nothing to humiliate him personally and destroy him. Thus, for example, when Gaius introduced a measure to found two colonies, which were to be composed of the most reliable citizens, they accused him of trying to ingratiate himself with the people; but when Livius proposed to found twelve and send out three thousand of the poorest citizens to each,⁴⁶ they approved his scheme wholeheartedly. Again, when Gaius distributed public land among those citizens whose need was greatest, on condition that each man should pay a small rent to the public treasury,⁴⁷ they protested angrily and charged him with currying favour with the masses; but when Livius proposed to relieve the tenants of even this token contribution, they were quite content. And when Gaius proposed to grant equal voting rights to the Latins, the aristocrats were deeply offended, but they approved a bill of Livius's which laid it down that no Latin should be beaten with rods even during his military service. Meanwhile, whenever Livius addressed the people, he made a point of explaining that he was introducing these measures on the authority of the senate, who always felt a special regard for the people's welfare, and indeed this was perhaps the one positive benefit which resulted from his legislation, namely that it created more kindly feelings among the people towards the senate.

Before this they had suspected and hated the aristocrats, but Drusus succeeded in softening these bitter feelings and dissolving their memories of past wrongs by assuring them that it was at the instance of the nobles that he had embarked upon his policy of conciliating the people and meeting their wishes.

10 (31). What did most to establish confidence in Livius's personal integrity and goodwill towards the people was the fact that he never appeared to propose any law for his own benefit or to further his private interests. It was always other men whom he sent out to take charge of new colonies, and he was careful to take no part in the administration of public funds, whereas Gaius always put himself at the head of such schemes and kept the most important functions in his own hands. So when Rubrius, one of his fellow-tribunes, introduced a bill⁴⁸ for the establishment of a colony on the site of Carthage, which had been destroyed by Scipio twenty-three years earlier,⁴⁹ and it fell to Gaius's lot to supervise its foundation, he sailed off to Africa to take charge. Drusus promptly took advantage of his absence to make further headway against him, ingratiate himself with the people and win their support, and for this purpose he found it especially useful to attack the character of Fulvius Flaccus.⁵⁰ This man was a friend of Gaius and had been elected with him as a commissioner to supervise the distribution of public land, but he was a born agitator and hence was detested by the senate, while others suspected him of stirring up discontent among the Italian allies and secretly inciting them to revolt. These charges were bandied about without any evidence or inquiry to support them, but Fulvius himself lent colour to such rumours, since his policies were not only unsoundly based, but carried with them the threat of war. Gaius duly attracted a share of the hatred which Flaccus aroused, and it was this more than anything else which brought about his ruin. For example, when Scipio Africanus the Younger died without any known cause, except that the marks of various blows upon his dead body seemed to indicate that he had suffered violence, as I have described in his Life,⁵¹ it was Fulvius whom most people believed to be guilty of his murder, since he had been Scipio's enemy and had violently abused him in a speech delivered from the rostra on the very day of his death; but nevertheless Gaius did not escape suspicion. And yet so outrageous a crime, committed against the foremost and greatest Roman of his day, was not even investigated, let alone punished, the reason being that the masses were opposed to any judicial proceedings being opened, for fear that if the murder were made the subject of an inquiry, the findings might implicate Gaius. However, these events took place several years earlier.⁵²

11 (32). Gaius had now travelled to Africa⁵³ to supervise the foundation of the new colony on the site of Carthage, which he named Junonia – or Heraea in the Greek form – and during his visit many ominous portents are said to have occurred, which indicated the displeasure of the gods. The leading standard was caught in a violent gust of wind, and although the bearer held on to it with all his strength, the shaft was snapped into pieces; the sacrificial victims lying on the altars were blown away by a hurricane and strewn beyond the stakes which marked out the boundaries of the city, and the markers themselves were attacked by wolves, who tore them out and scattered them a long way off. But in spite of these misfortunes, Gaius settled the boundaries of the colony, put its affairs in order within seventy days and then returned to Rome, since he had heard that Fulvius was being hard pressed by Drusus⁵⁴ and that the situation demanded his presence. The reason for this was the threat to his own position, which now presented itself in the person of Lucius Opimius, a man of extreme oligarchical views who was a leading member of the senate.⁵⁵ Opimius had once before failed to secure election to the consulship, when Gaius had opposed him and promoted the campaign of Fannius.⁵⁶ But this time Opimius had built up a strong body of supporters, and it was generally believed that he would not only win the election but that as soon as he was in office he would set himself to destroy his opponent's power. Indeed, Gaius's influence was already showing signs of decline, as the people had grown blasé about policies like his, now that there were so many leaders competing for their favour and the senate itself was willingly giving way.

12 (33). As soon as Gaius returned to Rome, his first action was to leave his house on the Palatine Hill and take up his quarters in the neighbourhood of the forum. He felt that this was more in keeping with his democratic principles, since this was the quarter in which most of the humblest and poorest citizens lived. Next he put forward the rest of his proposed legislation, so as to have these measures ratified by the vote of the people. But when a great multitude began to gather in Rome from all parts of Italy to support him,⁵⁷ the senate persuaded the consul, who was then Fannius, to expel from the city all persons who were not Roman by birth.⁵⁸ Thereupon, he issued a strange and exceptional proclamation, which forbade any of the allies or friends of Rome to appear in the city during this period. Gaius responded by issuing a counter-edict in which he denounced the consul for this action, and promised the allies his support if they refused to leave the city.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, he failed to keep this promise, and when he saw one of his close friends being dragged away to prison by Fannius's lictors,⁶⁰ he passed by without offering

any help. This may have been because he was afraid to put his power to the test, knowing that it was already on the wane, or because he was unwilling, as he himself declared, to take any action which would give his enemies the excuse they wanted to bring about an open conflict and an outbreak of violence.

It so happened that at this moment he had also given offence to his colleagues in office for the following reason. A gladiatorial display had been arranged for the people to watch in the forum, and most of the magistrates had had seats built around the arena, which they intended to hire to the spectators. Gaius insisted that these should be taken down so that the poor could watch the show without payment. But since his orders were ignored, he waited until the night before the event and then took all the workmen whom he had under his orders for public contracts and dismantled the seats, so that by the morning he was able to show the people a completely empty space. The people thought him a true man for this, but his colleagues were furious and regarded it as a piece of interference of the most presumptuous and violent kind. In fact it was generally believed that this action cost him his election to the tribunate for the third time, because although he won a majority of the votes, his colleagues mischievously falsified the returns and the declaration of the result. There was some dispute as to exactly what happened, but certainly Gaius took his defeat too much to heart, and when he saw his enemies exulting over his failure he told them in an ill-judged outburst of arrogance that they would laugh on the other side of their faces if they could see the gloom⁶¹ which awaited them as a result of his reforms.

13 (34). At the same time Gaius's opponents secured Opimius's election as consul,⁶² and they at once proceeded to repeal many of his laws⁶³ and also to interfere with the organization of the colony at Carthage. They did this in the hope of provoking Gaius into committing some action which would give them the excuse to destroy him. At first he bore this treatment patiently, but as time went on he was goaded by his friends and above all by Fulvius into recruiting a body of supporters to oppose the consul.⁶⁴ It was at this point, according to some accounts, that his mother helped him to organize resistance by hiring a number of foreigners and sending them to Rome disguised as harvesters, and these arrangements are said to be hinted at in various letters to her son.⁶⁵ Other authorities, however, maintain that Cornelia strongly disapproved of these plans.

Anyway, on the day when Opimius and his party had planned to revoke Gaius's laws, both factions posted themselves on the Capitol early in the morning. Then after the consul had offered up a sacrifice, one of his attendants, Quintus Antyllus,⁶⁶ who was carrying away the

entrails of the victims, shouted to Fulvius's supporters, 'Stand back, you rogues, and make way for honest citizens!' Some writers add that as he spoke these words he stretched out his bare arm towards them and made an insulting gesture. At any rate, he was instantly set upon and stabbed to death with long writing-styluses, which were said to have been made expressly for this purpose. The crowd was thrown into utter confusion by the murder, while the leaders of the two parties were affected in diametrically opposite ways. Gaius was deeply distressed and reproached his followers for having given their enemies the pretext they had been looking for all this time, while Opimius was triumphant, as if he could now seize a long-awaited opportunity, and he proceeded to urge the people to take revenge.

14 (35). At this moment there was a heavy downpour of rain and the assembly dispersed. Early next morning Opimius summoned a meeting of the senate, and while he began to transact business inside, others placed the naked body of Antyllus on a bier and carried it – as had previously been arranged – through the forum and past the senate-house to the accompaniment of piercing cries and lamentations. Opimius, who knew perfectly well what was happening, pretended to be surprised at the noise, so that some of his listeners went out into the forum. There, when the bier had been set down in the midst of the crowd, the senators began to express their horror at what they called an atrocious and monstrous crime, but the only effect that this had on the people was to stir up their hatred and make them execrate the aristocrats. The senators, they shouted, had murdered Tiberius Gracchus on the Capitol with their own hands and flung his body into the Tiber, and he was a tribune. Antyllus was nothing more than a servant, and although he had suffered more than he deserved, he had done a great deal to bring it upon himself: yet here he was, laid out in the forum, while the entire Roman senate stood weeping around him and was prepared to follow this hireling to the grave in order to destroy the one remaining champion of the people. After this the senators returned to the senate-house and formally passed a decree instructing Opimius to preserve the safety of the state in any way he could and to put down the tyrants.⁶⁷

Thereupon, Opimius gave notice to the senators to arm themselves, and every member of the equestrian order was commanded to bring with him the next morning two servants fully armed. Fulvius, on the other hand, also made his preparations and gathered together a large crowd of his followers, but Gaius, as he left the forum, paused in front of his father's statue, gazed silently at it for a long time and then with the tears rolling down his cheeks uttered a deep sigh and walked away. Many of those who saw this were seized with pity for Gaius:

they blamed themselves for abandoning him and betraying him, and made their way to his house where they spent the night outside his door.⁶⁸ Their behaviour was very different from that of the men who were guarding Fulvius. His followers passed an uproarious evening, shouting and drinking and boasting of what they would do. Fulvius himself, who was the first to become drunk, spoke and behaved in a way that was disgraceful for a man of his age. Gaius's supporters, on the other hand, were oppressed by the thought that a disaster was threatening their entire country and felt the deepest concern for the future, and so they remained silent and spent the night sleeping and keeping watch in turn.

15 (36). When it was day, Fulvius's partisans aroused their leader from his drunken stupor with some difficulty, and armed themselves with the various trophies and spoils of war which decorated his house and which he had captured after a victory won over the Gauls during his consulship.⁶⁹ Then they set out to the accompaniment of much shouting and noisy threats to occupy the Aventine Hill.⁷⁰ As for Gaius, he refused to arm himself, but set off in his toga, just as if he were on his way to the forum, and took with him nothing but a short dagger. As he was leaving his door, his wife⁷¹ threw herself at his feet and placing one arm around her husband and the other round their little son, said to him, 'When you leave me today, Gaius, I know you are not setting out for the rostra to speak as a tribune or a lawgiver, nor for some glorious campaign, where if you should die, as all men must some day, you would leave me honour to console my grief. No, you are going to expose yourself to the men who murdered Tiberius. It is honourable for you to go unarmed and to suffer wrong rather than inflict it on others; and yet our country will be none the better for taking your life, for injustice has triumphed in Rome, and it is violence and the sword which settle all disputes. If your brother had fallen before Numantia, his body would have been given back to us under the truce, but, as it is, I too may have to pray to some river or sea that one day it may yield up yours. What faith can we put in the gods or in the laws of men, when we have seen Tiberius murdered?' While Licinia was pouring out her sorrow, Gaius gently freed himself from her embrace and walked away with his friends without uttering a word. Licinia clutched vainly at his toga, then sank to the ground and lay for a long time speechless. At last her servants lifted her up unconscious and carried her to her brother Crassus's house.⁷²

16 (37). When their supporters were all assembled together, at Gaius's suggestion Fulvius sent his younger son⁷³ to the forum carrying a herald's wand. He was a handsome youth, and he now presented himself with the greatest deference and modesty, and with tears in his

eyes delivered a message to the consul and the senate which offered terms for an agreement. The majority of his listeners were by no means unwilling to negotiate, but Opimius insisted that Fulvius and Gracchus could not expect to discuss conditions with the senate through an envoy. They must behave as citizens who were answerable to the laws, and come down and surrender themselves for trial, and only then could they ask their listeners to put their anger aside. He ended by telling the young man that he must bring back his leaders' acceptance of these terms or not return at all. Gaius, so we are told, was willing to come and plead his case before the senate, but, as no one else would agree, Fulvius sent back his son to intercede with the senate as before. But Opimius was now eager to join battle, and he at once arrested the youth and put him under guard. He then advanced against Fulvius's party with a strong body of armed men supported by Cretan archers, who began to shoot at their opponents, wounded many of them and threw them into such confusion that they fled in terror. Fulvius took refuge in a disused bath,⁷⁴ where he was soon discovered with his eldest son, and both were put to the sword. No one saw Gaius take any part in the fighting, but, sunk in grief and despair at the turn events were taking, he fled for sanctuary to the Temple of Diana.⁷⁵ There he had intended to kill himself, but was prevented by two of his most faithful friends, Pomponius and Licinius,⁷⁶ who snatched away his sword and urged him to save himself. It is said that Gracchus knelt down in the temple, and, stretching out his hands towards the goddess, prayed that in return for their ingratitude and treachery towards him the people of Rome should remain enslaved to their rulers for ever after; for at the news that an amnesty had been proclaimed, many of his supporters were already openly changing sides.⁷⁷

17 (38). Gaius now tried to make his escape, but he was hotly pursued by his enemies and they were on the point of overtaking him at the wooden bridge over the Tiber.⁷⁸ Here his two friends insisted that he should go on, while they turned to face his pursuers and continued to defend the bridge against all comers until both were killed. Gaius had no other companion in his flight but a slave named Philocrates.⁷⁹ All the spectators along the road urged him to run faster, as though they were watching a race, but not a man came to his help or would even provide him with a horse, although he begged them to do so, for his enemies were close on his heels. He was still a little ahead of them when he reached a grove which was sacred to the Furies,⁸⁰ and there his slave Philocrates first killed his master and then himself. Some writers report that both men were captured alive, but that the slave had flung his arms round Gaius so closely that no one could touch him

until they had first dispatched Philocrates under a hail of blows. It is also said that a man cut off Gaius's head and was carrying it along, when it was snatched from him by one of Opimius's friends, Septimuleius,⁸¹ for it had been announced at the beginning of the battle that anyone who brought in the head of Gaius or Fulvius would be paid its weight in gold. Septimuleius brought the head to Opimius stuck on the point of a spear, and when it was placed on the scales it weighed seventeen and two-thirds pounds. On this occasion Septimuleius had committed a further despicable outrage, for he had removed the brain and poured molten lead into the cavity. The men who brought in Fulvius's head were considered to be of no account, and so got no reward at all. The bodies of Gaius, Fulvius and the rest of their followers who lost their lives, to the number of three thousand in all, were thrown into the Tiber,⁸² and their property was sold and the proceeds confiscated by the public treasury. Their wives were even forbidden to wear mourning, while Licinia, Gaius's wife, was deprived of her dowry. Most inhuman of all was the treatment meted out to Fulvius's younger son, who had neither lifted a hand nor even been present during the fighting. He had attempted to bring about a truce before the battle, had then been arrested and was put to death after the fighting was over. But the action which the people resented more bitterly than this or any other injustice was the building of a Temple of Concord⁸³ by Opimius. They felt that he was claiming honour and exulting, in a sense even celebrating a triumph, over the massacre of all these Roman citizens. And so somebody at night carved this inscription on the temple:

THIS TEMPLE OF CONCORD IS THE WORK OF MAD DISCORD.⁸⁴

18 (39). Opimius was the first consul who arrogated to himself the powers of a dictator, and who condemned to death without trial three thousand Roman citizens, among them Fulvius Flaccus and Gaius Gracchus, the one a consul who had celebrated a triumph,⁸⁵ and the other the foremost man of his age in virtue and reputation. Yet it is noteworthy that this same Opimius could not resist the temptation of fraud. When he was sent as a commissioner to Jugurtha, the ruler of Numidia, he accepted bribes from him,⁸⁶ and after being convicted of these shameful charges spent his old age in disgrace, amid the hatred and insults of his fellow-countrymen.

During the events themselves the people were cowed and humiliated by the collapse of the democratic cause, but they soon showed how deeply they missed and longed for the Gracchi.⁸⁷ Statues of the brothers were set up in a prominent part of the city, the places where they had fallen were declared to be holy ground, and the first-fruits of the season were offered up there throughout the year. Many

people even sacrificed to the Gracchi every day, and worshipped their statues as though they were visiting the shrines of gods.

19 (40). Cornelia is said to have borne her misfortunes in a noble and magnanimous spirit, and to have said of the sacred places where her sons had been murdered that these tombs were worthy of the dead who occupied them. She went to live at the promontory called Misenum⁸⁸ and made no change in her normal mode of life. She had many friends and kept a good table which was always thronged with guests; Greeks and other learned men frequently visited her, and all the reigning kings exchanged presents with her. Her visitors and intimate friends would listen with pleasure as she recalled the life and habits of her father, the great Scipio Africanus, but what they admired most of all was to hear her speak of her sons without showing sorrow or shedding a tear, and recall their achievements and their fate to any inquirer, as though she were relating the history of the early days of Rome.⁸⁹ This made some people think that old age or the weight of her misfortunes had affected her mind, and so far dulled her feelings as to make her incapable of suffering. Yet the truth is that such people are themselves too dull to understand how far a noble nature, an honourable ancestry and a virtuous upbringing can fortify a person against grief, and that although fate may defeat the efforts of virtue to avert misfortune, it cannot deprive us of the power to endure it with equanimity.⁹⁰

COMPARISON OF AGIS, CLEOMENES AND THE GRACCHI

1 (41). That is the end of our narrative, and now we have to put the lives in parallel and consider them together. The combination of their natural gifts and their outstanding upbringing and education gave the Gracchi a better moral grounding than any other Roman, and not even the most vicious and outspoken of their enemies would have presumed to deny it. Yet the character of Agis and Cleomenes seems to have been even stronger, given that they were not properly educated but trained in precisely the habits and behaviour that had long ago corrupted the elder generation, and still they made themselves the leaders of a new, austere and restrained way of life. There again, the period of the Gracchi was one when the reputation of Rome stood at its zenith, and they would have felt ashamed to abandon the ancestral tradition they inherited of modelling oneself on glorious deeds; the Spartan kings came after a generation that had taken the opposite course, and inherited a country when it was at its lowest ebb and at its most infirm, yet they did not allow that to blunt their enthusiasm to do good. And the greatest testimony to the Gracchi's restraint in matters of wealth and money-making is that there was no financial impropriety in their magistracies and their political lives; but Agis might have felt insulted if anyone had praised him for not taking other people's money when he had given all his own possessions to his countrymen, totalling 60 talents in cash besides all his other property.¹ One can imagine how he would have regarded the prospect of improper gain when he thought it excessive greed if, even legally, his wealth exceeded anyone else's.

2 (42). There was a big difference of scale in the courage and enterprise they showed in their reforms. The Gracchi were concerned with building roads and founding cities, and the most radical of Tiberius's measures was the distribution of public lands and of Gaius's the mixing of the juries, adding three hundred knights;² Agis and Cleomenes' reform was much more far-reaching, as they thought gradual healing and removal of the flaws was like (in Plato's words)³ cutting off the hydra's heads, and so they launched a revolution which

could get rid of all the evils and put everything in order at the same time. Perhaps it is truer to say that it was a counter-revolution, reversing the change that had caused all the trouble and restoring the country to its proper state. One could say too that the Gracchi were opposed by the greatest of the Romans, but the programme that Agis initiated and Cleomenes carried through was based on the finest and most majestic of models, the ancestral pronouncements on sound behaviour and equality, which they owed to the authority of Lycurgus and Lycurgus owed to that of Apollo at Delphi.⁴ The most important point of all is that the political careers of the Gracchi did not increase Rome's power, whereas as a result of Cleomenes' actions Greece soon saw Sparta in control of the Peloponnese and contending for hegemony with the greatest powers of the day, and this eventually freed Greece from Illyrian and Gallic arms and restored it to the descendants of Heracles.

3 (43). The way the men met their end also, I think, allows us to discriminate their virtues. The Gracchi died while fighting and then fleeing their fellow-citizens, whereas Agis all but died of his own volition to avoid killing any of his countrymen, and Cleomenes when humiliated and wronged first strove to defend himself and then, when the chance did not offer itself, bravely took his own life.

One can, however, look at it the other way. Agis died before achieving any military success; Cleomenes did win many fine victories, but against them one can put Tiberius's substantial achievement in taking the wall at Carthage and the peace-settlement he negotiated at Numantia, saving the lives of twenty thousand Romans who had no other hope of escape.⁵ Gaius too displayed great bravery both at Numantia and in Sardinia,⁶ so that they would both have ranked with the greatest of Roman generals if they had lived.

4 (44). If we turn to their political activity, one gets the impression that Agis was not vigorous enough. He was driven off course by Agesilaus and deceived his countrymen's hopes of land-division,⁷ and generally fell short of achieving his aspirations and fulfilling his promises: his youthfulness made him too tentative. Cleomenes by contrast took up the cause of revolution too brashly and violently, and killed the ephors illegally when it would have been easy to use his superiority in arms to bring them over or to remove them,⁸ just as he removed many others from the city. A good doctor or politician should not resort to ironware except in the most extreme necessity: in both cases it reveals a lack of skill, in the case of the politician it also shows a mix of impropriety and cruelty. Neither of the Gracchi initiated civil bloodshed, and it is said that Gaius did not even defend himself when his enemies threw missiles at him, but showed himself

as slow to act in fighting his countrymen as he had been brilliant in war against Rome's enemies: he came out unarmed, he withdrew when the fighting began and he was altogether seen to be more concerned not to harm others than to avoid harm himself.⁹ For that reason we should regard even the flight of the two brothers as an indication of caution rather than cowardice: each faced a choice of either giving way before his attackers, or standing his ground and acting in self-defence.

5 (45). The biggest criticism of Tiberius is that he was responsible for expelling his colleague from the tribunate, and that he sought a second tribunate for himself.¹⁰ Gaius was blamed for the death of Antyllius, but that is not fair and not accurate: Antyllius died against Gaius's wishes and despite his protests.¹¹ Cleomenes, if we leave aside the killing of the ephors, gave freedom to all the slaves,¹² and though he exercised a sole monarchy in name it was a joint monarchy in practice, as he took his brother Eucleidas from the same house to be his colleague;¹³ as for Archidamus, who should have shared the throne as he belonged to the other royal house, Cleomenes persuaded him to return from Messene but when he died made no investigation into his killing, lending plausibility to the accusation that he was involved in the murder.¹⁴ And yet he affected to take as his model Lycurgus, who willingly gave the kingship to his nephew Charilaus and, fearing that if the boy met even a natural death he might be suspected of involvement, spent a long time in exile and did not return until Charilaus had a son who would inherit the throne.¹⁵ Still, there is no Greek that can really be compared with Lycurgus; more to the point is the way that there were greater radical and irregular features in Cleomenes' programme.

What about the criticisms of their character? It is said that the Spartan kings from the beginning showed a tyrannical and bellicose temperament, whereas those who were jealous of the Gracchi could criticize their nature for showing an excess of ambition, nothing else.¹⁶ They acknowledged that this was fanned by the spirited rivalry with their opponents until they acted out of character, so that at the end it was as if they had left the ship of state to drift at the mercy of the winds. After all, could there have been any programme fairer or more equitable than the one they initially outlined? But then the rich resorted to violence and used their power to crush the law, and this meant that both had to struggle fiercely, one fearing for his own safety, the other trying to avenge his brother after he had been murdered with no justice, no formal decree and not even the authority of a magistrate.

You can see for yourself the differences on the basis of what I have

said.¹⁷ If I need to be precise, I should say that Tiberius was the best of them all in virtue; that young Agis made the fewest mistakes; and that when it came to boldness in action, Gaius was a good way behind Cleomenes.

SERTORIUS

INTRODUCTION TO SERTORIUS

Why Sertorius? He was not a negligible person, and his exploits in Spain in the seventies preoccupied and embarrassed Rome at the time; but still he is more minor a figure than any of the other late Republican grandees to whom Plutarch devoted a Life. Had *Sertorius* never been written, we would not have noticed the gap. If Plutarch's primary concern had been to weave together the history of the late Republic, then the main lines of the seventies are covered (and probably were already covered by the time *Sertorius and Eumenes* was written) by *Pompey* and *Lucullus*, and to a lesser extent *Crassus*. We know¹ that Plutarch planned to write a Life of Metellus Numidicus, the adversary of Jugurtha and the proud noble who brushed with Marius. Presumably Plutarch did not live to write that Life, but – once again, if comprehensiveness had been his only aim – we might have expected Metellus, or perhaps an earlier figure like Cincinnatus, to be a higher priority than Sertorius.

Comprehensiveness, then, was not the reason; Sertorius interested Plutarch for his own sake – but the nature of that interest was still not quite what we might expect. The most obvious way of treating him would be along the lines that Plutarch treated Coriolanus, as a renegade, someone who raised serious moral issues about whether it could ever be right to lead enemy forces against a Roman army. It is hardly surprising that a man who could do such a thing received a hostile treatment at the hands of conservative Roman sources, and Plutarch must have been familiar with that tradition: more on that below. Yet there is comparatively little of that in *Sertorius*. Plutarch recurrently stresses that Sertorius remained loyal to Rome. Even when he sets up his counter-senate in Spain, this is not made a sign of provocative treachery, sacrilegiously transferring overseas a hallowed Roman institution (contrast the 'insult to Rome' that Appian sees in this, *Civil Wars* 1.108, or indeed how Plutarch treats Antony's Alexandrian triumph at *Ant.* 54). Here it is instead a sign of his

‘magnanimity’, and an indication of how ‘he was above all a man who loved his country and longed to return home from exile’, someone who would never do anything to compromise ‘the authority of Rome’ (ch. 22). The same is true when Plutarch handles Sertorius’s dealings with Mithridates, Rome’s deadly enemy: even there the emphasis falls more on what Sertorius refused than on what he agreed to, with Sertorius insisting that Mithridates had no title to lands that Rome had squarely won from him (ch. 23). Sertorius’s dealings with the Spanish are certainly relevant, but for the way he shows himself an exemplary governor, righting the many wrongs of previous Roman administrations (chs. 6, 9), something that even spreads to Asia when his lieutenant Marcus Marius arrives there (ch. 24) – a typical interest of Plutarch, this (General Intro. I), but one that is particularly clear in this Life. The distinctive twist that Plutarch gives the material comes out clearly in the final chapters, where the reasons for the distemper of the faithless Perperna and his cronies are explained. Other sources highlight the men’s annoyance that Sertorius is favouring native Spaniards over his Roman colleagues (see n. 125). Plutarch sees it differently: it is those Roman colleagues who are maltreating the poor Spanish, and doing so as a way at getting at Sertorius (ch. 25). So any contrast of Spanish and Roman is no longer a yardstick of Sertorius going native, a gauge of treachery: it is rather a yardstick for good administration, a gauge of how superior he is to those other fugitive Romans. It is they who are the traitors, and traitors to him personally. National treachery is outside the equation.

Sertorius’s goodness is what matters: but this was a goodness that was cast into question by one gruesome episode in particular, the execution and enslavement of the Spanish schoolboys at Osca (ch. 25) – so once again his treatment of the Spanish becomes the important criterion. In this Life Plutarch theorizes these issues of character unusually explicitly. In ch. 10 he recounts many of Sertorius’s virtues, then continues:

On the other hand, towards the end of his life, his cruel and vindictive treatment of his hostages seemed to suggest that his humanity was not a matter of his natural character, but was a quality which he displayed for the sake of effect whenever the need arose. And yet it seems to me that a virtue which is unqualified and based on a firm grounding of rationality can never be transformed into its opposite by any mere stroke of fortune. I say this in spite of the fact that praiseworthy intentions and natural good qualities may change a person’s behavioural pattern if they are subjected to great and undeserved misfortune, as the guiding genius of a man’s life changes. And this, I believe, was the case with Sertorius, so that, when his luck began to fail, adversity had the effect of embittering him against those who treated him badly.

(Sert. 10)

It is a version of the question that so absorbed Tacitus in his depiction of the emperor Tiberius: if there was a bad phase at the end, does this mean that the character has always been bad, and that any apparent earlier virtue had been purely a matter of simulation (Tacitus's own final verdict at *Ann.* 6.51, and the sort of verdict Plutarch passes on, for instance, Philip V of Macedon, *Arat.* 51)? Or can it be that, under extreme circumstances, a person can indeed be corrupted, either by power itself (Lucius Arruntius's explanation of Tiberius at *Ann.* 6.48) or, as here, by misfortune?² In this passage Plutarch favours the second view, but the positioning of the discussion in mid-Life may encourage readers to carry on weighing both as they follow the later narrative, for instance when Sertorius burns Lauro to the ground (ch. 18). A good motive is found, true to Plutarch's biographical principles (General Intro. II): this was not a matter of indulging his passions, but done 'with the object of disgracing and humiliating Pompey's admirers' (ch. 18). But enough is said to intimate that this was a topic that could be debated.

The debate continues through the parallel Life, that of Eumenes – another minor player who punched above his weight in a clash of the more powerful, in his case that of the warring generals in the years after Alexander's death, and met his end when betrayed by his own comrades. (His Life will be included in the revised Penguin Classic *Age of Alexander*.) There too the impact of hardship and reverses on a good character is explored:

There is a shallow way in which good fortune can raise the spirits even of those who are not naturally gifted, and persuade them that they have a certain personal greatness and grandeur, as they gain prominence after their run of success. The person who has true stature and stability shows it more by the way he reacts to failure and reverses, and this was the case with Eumenes.

(*Eum.* 9)

Sertorius–Eumenes is one of the three pairings where the normal sequence is reversed, and the Roman comes first. In the other two cases – *Coriolanus–Alcibiades* and *Aemilius–Timoleon* – it is arguable that this is to allow a pattern of theme-then-variation, with the simpler or more standard story coming first and the variation coming second:³ Coriolanus is the simpler, bluffer figure, yet eventually even the versatile charm of Alcibiades can handle a difficult people no better than he; Fortune can strike down even the most prosperous, like Aemilius, at the height of their career, which makes the sustained good fortune of Timoleon all the more remarkable. This looks to be a similar case: *Sertorius* introduces the notion that ill fortune can corrupt a person's behaviour if virtue is not solidly based, and Eumenes can then appear all the more admirable for his constancy and dignity.

That does seem to be the implication of the narrative itself: it is remarkable, though, that the comparative epilogue leaves a different impression, one much more favourable to Sertorius and negative about Eumenes. It picks up the notion of moral decline that *Sertorius* 10 had aired, but by now it seems that Eumenes is the one that shows a virtue that is not solidly based:

Sertorius's death, then, did not diminish the glory of his life, for he suffered from his allies what no enemy had been able to inflict. Eumenes in contrast had been unable to escape capture through flight, then wanted to live on even in captivity and could neither avoid nor accept death properly. The victor had taken his body: through his beggings and pleadings Eumenes made him master of his spirit too.

(*Comp. Sert.–Eum.* 2)

That seems strangely harsh on Eumenes' death: the narrative itself had limited those 'beggings and pleadings' to a reasoned plea to his treacherous comrades not to hand him over to the enemy Antigonus (*Eum.* 17), followed by a spirited exchange with his mean-minded guard Onomarchus (18). But it does reflect Plutarch's concern in that final *Comparison* to tilt the scales in Sertorius's favour: this, indeed, is one of the few *Comparisons* that seems clearly to come down on one man's side rather than the other's.⁴

One reason for his favouritism is reflected in the other major theme of that *Comparison*:

Eumenes loved war and conflict, whereas Sertorius's taste was for peace and calm. Eumenes had the chance to retire from the fray and live a safe and honoured existence, but preferred to spend his time risking his life in fighting with the most powerful men of his day; Sertorius did not want a life of action or trouble, but was forced to fight for his own survival against people who would not let him live at peace.

(*Comp. Sert.–Eum.* 2, cf. *Sert.* 22)

So, Plutarch neatly goes on to summarize, that makes Eumenes the war-lover, but Sertorius the man of war. It is not hard to see which temperament the pacific Plutarch would prefer, this writer who could express reservations over Rome's mighty achievement precisely because it was owed to warfare (*Comp. Lycurgus–Numa* 4: see General Intro. IV). That may suggest another reason too why he found Sertorius so interesting a theme: precisely *not* because he played a major role in driving forward the main themes of the late Republic, but because he yearned to get away from them, even for the Isles of the Blest (chs. 8–9), yet could not. Events were too strong. Even a peaceful life as an ordinary citizen back at Rome was not open to him, for Metellus and Pompey would not allow it (ch. 22, *Comp. Sert.–Eum.*

2). This Life affords glimpses of another scheme of values and another way, the possibilities of a life not driven by the need for yet more achievement and yet more bloodshed. Plutarch is realistic enough to know that those possibilities may not be open, that the demands of politics and of those who need you may mean that one has to – and one *should* – lay the dreaming aside and re-enter the dirty world.⁵ But that does not mean that one need be as dirty as Perperna, as snobbish about his birth (chs. 15, 25) as Sertorius was open-minded to foreigners, as faithless as Sertorius was loyal; the final sadness is that Sertorius, master of timely deceptiveness, meets his end when he is finally out-deceived by Perperna. At least Perperna and the other plotters get their come-uppance too (ch. 27), and there is a certain satisfaction in ending the Life on that note.

Much of that emphasis suits Plutarch's own sensibility, but some of it will come from his sources, and this is a Life where we can be unusually sure of that source material. Sallust's *Histories* have not survived, but we have sufficiently extensive fragments to make it clear that for the main narrative this was the principal source. Often the language of fragments and the Life is extremely close (see e.g. nn. 21, 22, 39, 42, 45, 50, 55, 56, 66, 70, 81, 89, 99, 103–4, 107, 131). There would be more sources too,⁶ for instance for Sertorius's boyhood and youth, and probably for his experiences in the Civil Wars and before (Sallust's *Histories* began with events of 78 BCE, though admittedly nothing precludes the sort of biographical retrospect that we see in *Jug.* 63 and 95); but Sallust will be the major source. A fragment from Book 1 of the *Histories* (fr. 88 M. = 77 McG.: see n. 21 to ch. 4) comments on how poorly other accounts have treated Sertorius: 'many achievements carried out under his command were left unrecorded, principally because he was not a noble, thus arousing the spite of historians' (tr. McGushin). And Sallust, with his jaundiced view of Roman politics and traditional politicians (including Metellus, n. 107), was as capable as Plutarch of using Sertorius to strike a valuable counterpoint. He certainly seems to have used the theme of the Isles of the Blest (ch. 8 and n. 55) and the pet fawn (chs. 11, 20 and n. 66), both of which are not the sort of material to sit comfortably in a world dominated by Sullas, Caesars and Pompeys.

Plutarch too was never going to be too hard on such a person, even if he had not wanted also to present and explore a more complex picture of moral decline. Others were much harder, and Plutarch probably knew such negative portrayals, or at least knew that they existed. Livy's verdict is summarized by his epitomator as 'a great commander, one who was victorious more often than not against two generals Pompey and Metellus, but by the end both ruthless and reckless' (*Perioche* 96). Diodorus, perhaps echoing Posidonius, gives a

merciless picture of the end which is quite different from Plutarch's:

Sertorius could see that the movement among the natives was unstoppable, so behaved harshly towards the allies; he brought charges against some and killed them, imprisoned others, and confiscated the possessions of the wealthy. Once he had collected large quantities of silver and gold, he did not deposit them in the common war-chest but in his own treasury; he did not pay the soldiers their wages nor share anything with the captains; he conducted capital trials without council or advisers, but made himself the sole judge and delivered sentence in private. He did not deign to invite the captains to eat with him, and there were no signs of human warmth in his dealings with his friends. The decline of his power turned him into a wild beast, and he treated everyone autocratically. The common people hated him, but it was his friends who conspired against him ...

(Diod. 37.22a)

So by now he had alienated everyone, not just the disaffected Roman colleagues in the way that Plutarch describes. There is something of this portrayal in Appian too (*Civil Wars* 1.112–13: see nn. 62, 125 and 127), perhaps deriving from Livy.⁷ Appian for instance stresses the excesses of Sertorius's eating and drinking (n. 131), whereas Plutarch insists that his table remained decorous throughout (ch. 26).

Even though Diodorus's colouring is too crudely melodramatic for Plutarch's tastes, it may well be that treatments like this influenced him in his initial choice to foreground moral decline as a theme. Indeed, had Plutarch taken over a less extreme version of that material, in one way it might have helped: certainly there would have been more moral decline to investigate, even if it would have been hard to explain it so generously. But Plutarch knew too what misrepresentations propaganda could generate, especially when a tradition was hostile.⁸ We may certainly find a tension in this *Life* between the desire for a thought-provoking test-case and the preference for giving Sertorius the benefit of the moral doubt. The second tendency, so ingrained in Plutarch, ends by imparting a certain blandness, but that was a price that the morally generous biographer was prepared to pay.

SERTORIUS

[c. 126–73 BCE]

1. When we reflect that time is infinite and Fortune for ever changing her course, it need hardly surprise us that certain events should often repeat themselves quite spontaneously. For if the number of those elements which combine to produce a historical event is unlimited, then Fortune possesses an ample store of coincidences in the very abundance of her material: if, on the other hand, their number is fixed, then the same pattern of events seems bound to recur, since the same forces continue to operate upon them. Now, there are some people who take pleasure in collecting by hearsay or from their reading examples of accidental occurrences which look like the result of calculation and forethought. They notice, for instance, that two men named Attis have become celebrated in legend, the one a Syrian and the other an Arcadian, and that both were killed by a wild boar;¹ that there were two Actaeons, one of whom was torn to pieces by his dogs and the other by his lovers;² that there were two Scipios, one of whom conquered Carthage in the Second Punic War, while the other destroyed it utterly in the Third;³ that the city of Troy was originally captured by Hercules on account of the horses of Laomedon, then by Agamemnon through the so-called 'Wooden Horse', and finally by Charidemus, because a horse fell in the gateway and prevented the Trojans from closing them quickly enough.⁴ Again, there are two cities which bear the same name as the most fragrant of plants, Ios (violet) and Smyrna (myrrh), and the poet Homer is said to have been born in the one and died in the other. Let us therefore add our own contribution to this collection. The most warlike of generals and those who have achieved most by a combination of cunning and natural ability have been one-eyed men, namely Philip of Macedon, Antigonus, Hannibal⁵ and the subject of the present Life, Sertorius. We may say of him that he was more chaste towards women than Philip, more loyal to his friends than Antigonus, and more merciful to his enemies than Hannibal. None of his rivals surpassed him in intelligence, but every one of them did so in good fortune. Fortune he always found harder to deal with than his acknowledged enemies, and yet he proved that he was a match for the experience of Metellus, the daring of Pompey, the luck of Sulla and the might of the whole Roman

people, and this in spite of the fact that he spent much of his career as an exile and as a foreigner commanding barbarians.

Of all the Greek generals I think that the career of Eumenes of Cardia⁶ offers the closest parallel to his. Both men were born leaders, and both combined a warlike spirit with a genius for outwitting the enemy by deceit: both were banished from their own countries, commanded foreign troops, and suffered a similar violent and unjust stroke of fortune in their deaths, since both were the victims of conspiracy and were assassinated by the very men whom they were leading to victory against their enemies.

2. Quintus Sertorius belonged to a family of some distinction⁷ in the Sabine city of Nursia.⁸ He lost his father when he was a child, and was carefully brought up by his widowed mother,⁹ to whom he seems to have been unusually devoted. Her name, we are told, was Rhaia. His education included a grounding in the law, and his eloquence earned him a certain reputation in the city¹⁰ when he was little more than a boy,¹¹ but as a result of his brilliant exploits on the battlefield his ambitions soon turned towards a military career.

3. He had his first experience of war under Caepio during the campaign in which the Cimbri and the Teutones broke into Gaul,¹² when the Romans suffered a crushing defeat and their army was routed.¹³ After this battle, in spite of losing his horse and being severely wounded, Sertorius swam across the Rhône in the teeth of a strong current, still carrying his shield and his breastplate;¹⁴ such was the strength of his body and so rigorously had he hardened it by training. Not long afterwards the same enemy moved forward in a new offensive.¹⁵ The invaders marched in a horde scores of thousands strong and they threatened destruction to all, so that at such a moment it was no small thing for a Roman to keep his post and obey his general's orders. Marius was then in command, and Sertorius offered to go and reconnoitre the enemy's camp as a spy. He disguised himself in Celtic dress, mastered as many of the common phrases of the language as he was likely to need for a simple conversation¹⁶ and then boldly went and mingled with the barbarians. There he used his eyes and ears to pick up the most important details of the enemy's dispositions and returned to Marius. For this act of valour he was duly decorated, and during the rest of the campaign he proved his courage and intelligence on so many occasions that he was promoted by Marius and completely won the general's confidence as well as a considerable reputation.

After the war against the Cimbri and Teutones was over, he was sent to Spain to serve as military tribune under general Didius,¹⁷ and he spent the winter in Castulo, a city of the Celtiberians.¹⁸ Here the

Roman troops were living in the midst of such plenty that they threw off all discipline and spent much of their time drunk. The barbarians came to despise them and one night they summoned their neighbours, the Gyriseni,¹⁹ to help them: they then attacked the Romans in their quarters and began to slaughter them. Sertorius slipped out with a few companions, rallied the soldiers who were making their escape, and surrounded the city. He found that a gate had been left open through which the attackers had stolen in, but he did not repeat their mistake. He posted a guard on it, and then, once he had gained control of every quarter of the town, he put to death every male who was old enough to bear arms. When the slaughter was over, he ordered all his men to take off their own armour and tunics, put on the clothes of the Spaniards and follow him in this disguise to the city of the men who had made the attack. The barbarians were deceived by the Romans' appearance, and Sertorius found the gates of their city open, and caught a crowd of men coming out to greet what they imagined was the raiding-party of their friends and fellow-citizens returning from a successful night's work. Thereupon, the Romans killed most of the inhabitants by their city gates; the rest surrendered and were sold into slavery.

4. This exploit made Sertorius's name known throughout the length and breadth of Spain. As soon as he returned to Rome he was appointed quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul,²⁰ where the situation was critical. The Marsic War²¹ was breaking out, and Sertorius was ordered to raise troops and procure arms. He carried out his task with such speed and enthusiasm, compared with the feeble and dilatory performance of his other young colleagues, that he won the reputation of a man who was destined for a career of great achievements. However, his promotion to be a commander did nothing to diminish his daring as a fighting soldier: on the contrary, he continued to carry out extraordinary feats of courage in battle and to expose himself unsparingly, with the result that he was wounded and lost the sight of an eye. This was an injury on which he always prided himself.²² Others, he used to say, could not continually carry about with them the evidence of their military decorations but must leave their necklaces and spears and crowns behind, whereas he could wear the badge of courage wherever he went, and those who saw what he had lost saw the proof of his bravery at the same time. The Roman people also paid him the tribute he deserved. When he entered the theatre they greeted him with loud applause and cries of admiration, and this was an honour that was seldom granted even to men who were far advanced in years and distinguished in rank. In spite of this, when he stood for the tribuneship²³ he was opposed by Sulla and lost the

election, and this seems to have been the cause of his subsequent antagonism to Sulla.

Not long afterwards Marius was defeated by Sulla²⁴ and took refuge in Africa, while in the following year Sulla set out for his campaign against Mithridates.²⁵ Of the two consuls then in office,²⁶ Octavius was attached to Sulla and his policies, while Cinna, who hoped to bring about another revolution, was doing his utmost to restore the declining fortunes of Marius's faction.²⁷ Sertorius gave his support to Cinna, more particularly because he saw that Octavius was a man of little initiative, who was inclined to distrust Marius's supporters. A great battle was fought between the consuls in the forum from which Octavius emerged victorious, and Cinna and Sertorius fled after losing nearly ten thousand men.²⁸ However, they succeeded in rallying to their side most of the troops who were still scattered throughout Italy, and with these reinforcements they soon made themselves a match for Octavius.

5. Marius now sailed home from Libya²⁹ and volunteered to serve as a private citizen under Cinna, who was still consul. The others were in favour of accepting this offer, but Sertorius opposed it. He may have reckoned that his own influence with Cinna would be weakened by the presence of another general so much more experienced than himself, or he may have been afraid of Marius's violent and vindictive temper,³⁰ suspecting that in the hour of triumph his rage would carry him far beyond the bounds of justice and throw all their affairs into confusion. So he pointed out to Cinna that since they had already overcome their enemies there remained little for them to do, and that if they accepted Marius's proposals, he would soon find ways of diverting all the power and prestige of their party into his own hands, since he found it difficult to share authority and was not to be trusted. Cinna replied that these arguments were sound enough, but that since he himself had invited Marius to join them,³¹ he did not see how he could turn him away, and indeed would feel ashamed to do so. Sertorius retorted, 'I had understood up to now that Marius had come to Italy on his own initiative, and so I was simply considering how far this would be useful to us. But since you had invited him, you had no right to discuss the problem of what to do with him, as if it were an open question. You should have welcomed him and employed him at once, for after you have given your word there is no room for further argument.' Cinna then sent for Marius, the army was divided into three corps and the three men held joint command.

When the fighting was over,³² Cinna and Marius indulged themselves in every kind of insolence and cruelty,³³ so that even the horrors of war seemed to the Romans to have been a kind of golden

age by comparison. Sertorius was the only man, we are told, who neither killed anyone in anger nor abused his authority in the hour of victory, but actually rebuked Marius and on several occasions appealed personally to Cinna to use his power more moderately.³⁴ And finally it was Sertorius who dealt with the slaves whom Marius had recruited during the war and employed as a personal bodyguard to carry out his acts of tyranny. They had grown rich and become a powerful body of men, partly as a result of Marius's direct orders or of his tolerance of their behaviour, and partly through the outrages they had committed against their masters; for they had murdered many of these, and then raped their wives and violated their children. Sertorius decided that he could no longer tolerate their existence, and he had them surrounded in their camp and killed with javelins. This gang numbered no fewer than four thousand.³⁵

6. Not long after this Marius died, and a little later Cinna was killed.³⁶ The younger Marius succeeded then in making himself consul, even though this was unconstitutional: Sertorius very much disapproved.³⁷ Men such as Carbo, Norbanus and Scipio³⁸ made futile attempts to block Sulla's advance upon Rome, and their cause began to collapse everywhere, partly through treachery and partly through the cowardice and feebleness of their generals. In this situation there was no reason for Sertorius to stay in Rome and watch affairs go from bad to worse because of the incompetence of his superiors. Finally Sulla pitched his camp near Scipio's army, made friendly overtures as if he were about to negotiate for peace, and set about subverting his opponent's troops.³⁹ Sertorius gave Scipio clear warning of what was happening, but was unable to convince him. So at last he gave up Rome for lost and set out for Spain,⁴⁰ hoping that if he could arrive there before his enemies and establish himself securely he would be able to offer a refuge to his friends, who would soon be defeated in Italy.

He met heavy storms on his march through the mountains, and the barbarians demanded that he should pay them dues for his passage. His companions took offence at this and thought it a monstrous humiliation that a Roman proconsul should pay tribute to a wretched tribe of barbarians, but Sertorius made light of what seemed to them a disgrace. He remarked that he was buying time, which to a man who has great objects in view is the most precious commodity in the world. So he pacified the barbarians by paying them, and then hurried on and made himself master of Spain. He found that its tribes were strong in numbers and possessed plenty of fighting men, but that because of the greed and insolence of the officials who were periodically sent out to them,⁴¹ the people had become bitterly resentful of the whole

character of the Roman administration. So he set himself to win them over by entering into personal dealings with the chiefs and by reducing the taxes imposed on the people.⁴² But the measure which earned him more gratitude than any other was his decision to cease billeting his soldiers upon them,⁴³ for he gave orders to his troops to make their winter quarters in tents outside the walls of the various cities, and he set the example by pitching his own there. However, he did not entirely rely upon the goodwill of the barbarians, but took the precaution of arming all the Roman settlers in the country who were of military age, and he also put in hand the manufacture of military engines and equipment of many kinds and the construction of triremes. In this way he kept the cities firmly under control, and showed himself lenient in his civil administration but formidable in his preparations against his enemies.

7. When the news reached him that Sulla had captured Rome and that the cause of Marius and Carbo was lost,⁴⁴ he expected that it would not be long before a general and an army were on their way to fight out the issue with him. He therefore sent Livius Salinator⁴⁵ with a force of six thousand infantry to block the passes of the Pyrenees. Soon after this Gaius Annius⁴⁶ was sent out by Sulla, and when he saw that Salinator had taken up an impregnable position, he was at a loss to know what to do next and encamped at the foot of the mountains. However, at this point a certain Calpurnius, surnamed Lanarius,⁴⁷ assassinated Salinator, whose soldiers then abandoned the heights of the Pyrenees. Annius proceeded to cross the mountains and marched on with his large force, brushing aside the weak resistance he encountered. Sertorius was not strong enough to oppose his advance and retreated with three thousand men to New Carthage.⁴⁸ There he embarked his troops, crossed the sea and landed in North Africa in the territory of the Mauretanians. But while his soldiers were fetching water, without having posted a guard, they were attacked by the barbarians, and after losing many men Sertorius set sail again for Spain. Here he was once more driven away from the coast, but, after joining forces with a number of pirate ships from Cilicia,⁴⁹ he attacked the island of Pityussa,⁵⁰ overpowered the garrison which Annius had placed there and forced a landing. Soon afterwards Annius arrived with a large fleet and a force of five thousand infantry, whereupon Sertorius ventured to engage him in a full-scale naval battle, even though his own ships were frailly built and were designed for speed rather than for fighting. A strong west wind whipped up the sea and most of Sertorius's ships were driven sideways on to the rocky shore because of their light construction. Sertorius himself and his few remaining vessels could neither put out into the open sea because of

the gale nor land because of the enemy, and so for ten days he was tossed about in a desperate struggle with high seas and violent winds and only succeeded with great difficulty in riding out the storm.

8. As the wind died down, he ran in among a group of scattered and waterless islands, where he spent the night. Then, setting sail from there and passing through the straits of Gades,⁵¹ keeping the Spanish coast on his right, he landed a little north of the delta of the River Baetis,⁵² which flows into the Atlantic, and has given its name to the neighbouring parts of Spain.⁵³

Here he met a number of sailors who had recently returned from the Atlantic islands.⁵⁴ There are two of these, separated from one another by a narrow channel. They are 1,250 miles from the African coast and are known as the Isles of the Blest. The rains are moderate and arrive only at long intervals, and for most of the year they enjoy soft breezes which scatter a heavy dew. Thus the islands not only possess a rich and fertile soil, which responds well both to ploughing and to planting, but they also produce fruits which grow of their own accord and are abundant and wholesome enough to support a whole people without the need for any human labour or effort. The seasons are temperate, and the transition between them so gentle that the air which surrounds these islands is always healthy and serene. For the northerly and easterly winds which blow from our part of the world launch themselves into empty space, and so dissipate and lose their force before they arrive at the islands, while those from the south and west, which envelop their shores from the seaward side, sometimes bring soft and scattered showers of rain, but more often merely cool them with moist breezes which gently and imperceptibly nourish the soil. For this reason it is generally believed even among the barbarians that these are the Elysian Fields and the abode of the blessed which Homer has made famous in the *Odyssey*.⁵⁵

9. When Sertorius heard this report he was seized with an overwhelming desire to settle in the islands and live in peace there, safe from tyranny and endless wars. But his allies, the Cilician pirates, had no desire for peace or leisure; their interest was all in winning spoils and riches. So as soon as they discovered Sertorius's intention, they sailed off to Africa to restore Ascalis the son of Iptha to the throne of Mauretania.⁵⁶ Sertorius did not allow this setback to make him abandon hope. Instead he decided to help those who were opposing Ascalis. His object here was to inspire his followers with fresh hopes, offer them a new adventure and so keep them united in spite of all their hardships. The Moors were pleased at his arrival and he quickly moved into action, defeated Ascalis in battle and proceeded to besiege him. And when Sulla sent out Pacciacus⁵⁷ with an army to

help Ascalis, Sertorius engaged him in battle, killed him, won over his army after their defeat and captured the city of Tingis,⁵⁸ where Ascalis and his brothers had fled for refuge.

According to the Libyans, this city is the burial place of the giant Antaeus.⁵⁹ Because of the enormous size of the tomb, Sertorius had been inclined to disbelieve this legend of the barbarians, and he therefore had it dug open. But when he came upon the body and discovered, so it is said, that it was sixty cubits long, he was dumbfounded, and after offering a sacrifice had the tomb filled up again. He then gave his own confirmation to the story and paid fresh honours to the memory of Antaeus. Now, the people of Tingis have a legend that, after Antaeus's death, his wife Tinga slept with Hercules and bore him a son named Sophax, who later became king of this country and gave his mother's name to the city. Sophax is also said to have had a son, Diodorus, who brought many of the Libyan peoples under his rule, since he commanded a Greek army made up of the Olbians and Mycenacans, who had been settled by Hercules in that region. But this story may well have originated from a desire to please King Juba, for no king was ever more devoted to historical research;⁶⁰ at any rate, his ancestors are said to have been descendants of Sophax and Diodorus.

When Sertorius had established his authority throughout the country, he gave fair treatment to all those who approached him and put their trust in him: their property and cities were restored and they were reinstated in authority, while he accepted only such gifts as it was proper for them to offer.

10. While he was considering where he should turn his energies next, the people of Lusitania sent ambassadors and invited him to become their leader.⁶¹ They badly needed a commander of great reputation and experience, for they felt themselves threatened by the power of Rome, and when they learned more about Sertorius's character from the men who had met him they entrusted their safety to his hands alone. For Sertorius was a man, it is said, who could resist pleasure and fear alike;⁶² he had the character to be unmoved in the face of danger, nor did he become over-elated with success. In the open field he was as bold as any commander of his time, while for any campaign which required secrecy of movement or a sudden initiative in seizing strong positions or crossing rivers, or for operations which demanded speed, he possessed a skill in deceiving the enemy or, if necessary, inventing falsehoods which amounted to genius. He showed himself generous in rewarding deeds of valour and at the same time merciful in punishing offences. On the other hand, towards the end of his life, his cruel and vindictive treatment of his hostages⁶³ seemed to suggest

that his humanity was not a matter of his natural character, but was a quality which he displayed for the sake of effect whenever the need arose. And yet it seems to me that a virtue which is unqualified and based on a firm grounding of rationality can never be transformed into its opposite by any mere stroke of fortune. I say this in spite of the fact that praiseworthy intentions and natural good qualities may change a person's behavioural pattern if they are subjected to great and undeserved misfortune, as the guiding genius of a man's life changes. And this, I believe, was the case with Sertorius, so that, when his luck began to fail, adversity had the effect of embittering him against those who treated him badly.⁶⁴

11. However, at the period which I am now describing, he accepted the Lusitanians' invitation and set out from Africa. He organized their army as general with absolute powers, and then brought the neighbouring Spanish province under their control.⁶⁵ Most of the tribes acknowledged his authority of their own accord, chiefly because of the way in which his rule combined mildness with vigour: but he also employed various ingenious devices on occasion to trick and to beguile the people, the chief of which was the affair of his fawn. The story goes as follows.

A countryman of that region named Spanus came upon a doe which had just given birth and was trying to escape the hunters. He could not overtake the mother, but he followed the fawn because he was struck by its unusual colour, which was all milk-white, and finally he caught it.⁶⁶ It so happened that Sertorius had lately encamped in the neighbourhood, and whenever people brought him game or the produce of their farms he would receive such gifts gladly and give a generous reward to anyone who favoured him in this way. So Spanus brought the fawn and made him a present of it, which Sertorius accepted. At first he did not take any special notice of the animal, but after a while he made it so tame and used to human company that it would obey him whenever he called. It accompanied him on his walks, showed no fear of crowds or the uproar of camp life and little by little he began to build up the impression that there was something sacred and mysterious about the creature. He declared that she was a gift from Artemis and possessed the power of revealing secrets to him, for he knew that barbarians are naturally prone to superstition. He also resorted to such devices as the following. Whenever he received secret intelligence that the enemy had invaded his territory or were attempting to persuade some city to revolt, he would give it out that the fawn had spoken to him in his sleep and warned him to keep his troops ready. Again, whenever he learned of any victory won by his generals, he would hide the messenger and bring out the fawn

crowned with garlands to celebrate the arrival of good news: then he would encourage his men to rejoice and offer sacrifice to the gods, for they could rest assured that they would soon hear of some success.

12. Through devices such as these he made the people amenable to all his plans, for they became convinced that they were being guided not by the mortal intelligence of a mere foreigner, but by a god; and indeed the facts could very well support their belief, for the growth of Sertorius's power was truly extraordinary. His army consisted of the 2,600 men whom he called Romans, and a motley band of seven hundred Libyans, who had crossed over to Lusitania with him, reinforced by four thousand Lusitanian light infantry and seven hundred horsemen.⁶⁷ With this force he carried on war with four Roman generals,⁶⁸ whose combined strength amounted to 120,000 infantry, six thousand cavalry, two thousand archers and slingers,⁶⁹ together with the resources of innumerable cities, while he at first controlled only twenty cities all told. And yet with such small beginnings and slender resources he not only subdued large tribes and captured many cities, but he triumphed time and again over the generals who were sent against him. He defeated Cotta in a naval battle near the straits of Mellaria, routed Fufidius the governor of Baetica on the banks of the Baetis, and killed two thousand Roman soldiers with him, while Sertorius's quaestor overcame Lucius Domitius, the proconsul of Nearer Spain.⁷⁰ Sertorius also killed Thoranius,⁷¹ one of the commanders whom Metellus sent against him with an army, and on Metellus⁷² himself, the foremost Roman citizen and most distinguished general of his time, he inflicted a whole series of defeats, and reduced him to such straits that Lucius Manlius was obliged to march from south-western Gaul to rescue him and Pompey the Great was hastily dispatched from Rome with reinforcements.⁷³ Metellus was, in fact, utterly baffled. He was confronted by a daring opponent who evaded every kind of open engagement, but who was always able, thanks to the agility and light equipment of his Spanish troops, to adapt his tactics to new conditions. Metellus, on the other hand, had gained his experience in pitched battles, fought in the orthodox fashion by men in full armour, and had been accustomed to command a slow-moving phalanx, which stood its ground in battle. Such troops were splendidly trained for repelling and bearing down an enemy in hand to hand fighting, but were quite incapable of climbing mountains, or keeping contact with the incessant attacks and withdrawals of light troops who faded away like the wind, nor could they endure hunger, as their enemies could, nor live under the open sky with neither a fire nor a tent.

13. Besides, Metellus was by this time well advanced in years,⁷⁴ and

after the many great battles he had fought was inclined to indulge in a relaxed and luxurious style of living, whereas Sertorius, now in the prime of life, was full of mettle, and his physique was capable of extraordinary feats of strength, rapid movement and hard living. He never indulged in drinking-bouts,⁷⁵ even in his hours of relaxation, and he had accustomed himself to endure great physical effort, long marches and continuous lack of sleep, supported all the while on a coarse and meagre diet. Besides this, since he was constantly on the move, or else hunting whenever he could spare the time, he became so familiar with the lie of the country and its accessible and inaccessible parts that he always knew how to find a way of escape in retreat, or to cut off the enemy when in pursuit.

The consequence was that by being prevented from fighting, Metellus suffered all the disadvantages of defeat, while by constantly eluding his enemy Sertorius reaped all the advantages of victory. For example, he would cut off his opponents' supplies of water and prevent them from foraging; then, if the Romans advanced, he would slip out of their way, but if they stayed in camp he would harass them. If they laid siege to a place, he would immediately appear and blockade them in turn by cutting off their supplies. In the end he succeeded in reducing the Romans to such despair by these tactics that, when he challenged Metellus to single combat,⁷⁶ the soldiers shouted at their commander and urged him to fight, general against general and Roman against Roman, and when Metellus refused, they jeered at him. Metellus only laughed at this, and he was right, for a general, as Theophrastus says, should die a general's death, not that of a common soldier.⁷⁷

Metellus had noticed that Sertorius received a great deal of help from the tribe of the Langobrigae,⁷⁸ and that their capital city was vulnerable because of its lack of water. The towns-people possessed only one spring inside the city, and the streams which flowed through the suburbs and under the walls could be cut off by any besieging force. He therefore advanced against the city, expecting that, once his opponents had been deprived of water, he could finish off the siege in two days, and for the same reason he ordered his troops to carry rations for no more than five days. But Sertorius quickly came to the rescue, ordered two thousand skins to be filled with water and offered a large reward for the delivery of each skin. Both Spaniards and Mauretanians flocked to volunteer for the task, so that Sertorius was able to pick men who could move swiftly as well as possessing great physical strength, and he then dispatched them by a route through the mountains. Their orders were that after delivering the skins inside the city they should smuggle out the entire non-combatant population which could not take part in the defence, so that the water should last

all the longer for the garrison. Metellus was much disturbed when he discovered this, since his soldiers had already used up their rations, and so he sent out Aquinus⁷⁹ with a force six thousand strong to forage for provisions. But Sertorius learned of this move and set an ambush of three thousand men by the side of the road along which Aquinus was marching back. These men suddenly swarmed out of a shady ravine and fell upon Aquinus's troops from the rear, while Sertorius attacked from the front and routed his opponents, killing some and taking others prisoner. Aquinus escaped to Metellus, but not without first losing both his weapons and his horse, whereupon Metellus ignominiously withdrew from the siege amid the jeers of the Spaniards.

14. By such exploits as these Sertorius earned not only the barbarians' admiration but also their love, and at the same time by introducing Roman weapons and battle formations and passwords he did away with their savage and frenzied displays of courage, and transformed their military strength into that of a disciplined army instead of a horde of brigands. He also allowed them generous quantities of gold and silver to decorate their helmets and ornament their shields, and accustomed them to wear flowered cloaks and tunics. He provided them with the money to buy all these things, and by appealing to and sharing their sense of rivalry and display he completely won their hearts. But what attached them to him most deeply of all was the care he took of their children. He sent for all the boys of the noblest parentage from the various tribes and placed them in the large city of Osca,⁸⁰ where he appointed masters to teach them Greek and Roman letters. Thus to all appearances he was educating them with the assurance that when they had grown to manhood he would give them a share in administration and authority, whereas in reality he had made them his hostages. Meanwhile, their fathers were delighted to see their sons dressed in their togas with purple borders and decorously attending their classes, while Sertorius paid their teachers, frequently got them to put on displays, awarded prizes to the best pupils and presented them with the golden pendants which the Romans call *bullae*.

Now, it was the custom in Spain for the bodyguard which was stationed around a commander to die with him, if he was killed in battle, and the barbarians in these parts call this action a 'consecration'. The other commanders had only a few of these guards or comrades in arms, but by this time there were thousands of men who followed Sertorius and had dedicated themselves to die with him in this fashion. The story goes that when his army was defeated near a certain city and the enemy were pressing hard upon them, the Iberians

exposed themselves without a thought for their safety, rescued Sertorius and carried him up to the walls, lifting him on to their shoulders one after another.⁸¹ Then only when their general was safe did they make their escape, each man looking after himself.

15. And in fact it was not only the Spaniards who cherished Sertorius: the troops who had come with him from Italy were no less devoted to him. At any rate, when Perpenna Vento,⁸² who belonged to the same political faction as Sertorius, arrived in Spain with a strong force and large sums of money, and decided to fight Metellus independently,⁸³ his soldiers quickly became dissatisfied with this plan and there was much talk in his camp about Sertorius. This angered Perpenna, who was intensely conceited because of his noble birth and his wealth. But when the news arrived that Pompey was crossing the Pyrenees,⁸⁴ Perpenna's soldiers snatched up their standards, seized their arms and raised an outcry against their general. They demanded that he should lead them to Sertorius, and threatened that if he did not they would go without him and put themselves in the hands of a general who could protect both himself and the men under his command. So Perpenna gave way and led them off to join Sertorius, thus bringing him a reinforcement of fifty-three cohorts.⁸⁵

16. Sertorius's strength was now rapidly increasing, for all the tribes between the Ebro and the Pyrenees came over to his side, and troops came flocking daily to join him from every quarter. At the same time he was troubled by the lack of discipline and the overconfidence of these newly arrived barbarians, who would shout at him to attack the enemy and had no patience with his delaying tactics, and he therefore tried to win them over by argument. But when he saw that they were discontented and persisted in pressing their demands regardless of the circumstances, he let them have their way and allowed them to engage the enemy; he hoped that they would suffer a defeat without being completely crushed, and that this would make them better disposed to obey his orders in future. The event turned out as he expected and Sertorius came to their rescue, provided a rallying point for the fugitives, and led them safely back to his camp. His next step was to revive their dejected spirits, and so a few days later he summoned a general assembly. Before it he produced two horses, one of them old and enfeebled, the other large and lusty and possessing a flowing tail, which was remarkable for the thickness and beauty of its hair. By the side of the weak horse stood a tall strong man, and by the side of the powerful horse a short man of mean physique. At a signal the strong man seized the tail of his horse and tried with all his strength to pull it towards him, as if to tear it off, while the weak man began to pull the hairs one by one from the tail of the strong horse.

The strong man, after tugging with all his might to no purpose and causing the spectators a great deal of amusement in the process, finally gave up the attempt, while the weak man quickly and with very little trouble stripped his horse's tail completely bare.⁸⁶ Then Sertorius rose to his feet and said, 'Now you can see, my friends and allies, that perseverance is more effective than brute strength, and that there are many difficulties that cannot be overcome if you try to do everything at once, but which will yield if you master them little by little. The truth is that a steady continuous effort is irresistible, for this is the way in which Time captures and subdues the greatest powers on earth. Now Time, you should remember, is a good friend and ally to those who use their intelligence to choose the right moment, but a most dangerous enemy to those who rush into action at the wrong one.' So by devising object-lessons like this from time to time and drawing the encouraging moral, Sertorius taught the barbarians to wait for their opportunities.

17. Of all his military exploits none has been more admired than his achievement in dealing with the tribe known as the Characitani. This people's territory lies to the north of the River Tagonius.⁸⁷ They do not live in cities or villages, but on a large and lofty hill, whose northern side is a steep cliff honeycombed with caves and hollows. The soil of the countryside at the foot of the hill consists of a white clay, which is porous and crumbles at a touch. It is not firm enough to bear a man's tread, and even if it is only slightly stirred, it scatters far and wide like ash or unslaked lime. Whenever the barbarians of these parts feared an attack, they would collect all their plunder, hide in these caves and stay quiet, and in this refuge it was impossible to capture them by force. At the time I am describing, Sertorius happened to have fallen back before Metellus and pitched his camp at the foot of this hill, and the savage inhabitants showed their contempt for him, as they supposed that he had only retreated there because he had been defeated. Sertorius, either out of anger or because he did not choose to be thought a fugitive, rode up to the hill and reconnoitred it. The heights were evidently impregnable, but as he rode idly around them, muttering empty threats, he noticed that great quantities of dust from the soil which I have described were being carried by the breeze in the direction of the barbarians' caves. The mouths of these, as I have explained, faced north, and the breeze which blows from that quarter – some people call it *Caecias* – is the strongest and most prevalent wind in that region. It takes its rise from marshy plains and snow-covered mountains, and at that season, which was the height of summer, its strength was increased by the melting of the northern snows, so that it blew a deliciously cool gale which refreshed both

men and beasts throughout the day. When Sertorius had pondered over what he had seen and questioned the local inhabitants about the prevailing conditions, he ordered his soldiers to take some of this light and dusty soil, which I have described, and pile it in a heap directly opposite the hill. The barbarians imagined this to be a mound which was being raised as a siege-work to attack them, and laughed at their enemy. Sertorius kept his soldiers working at this task until the evening, and then marched them back to their camp. At daybreak the next morning a gentle breeze sprang up, which stirred the lightest parts of the heaped-up soil, and scattered them like chaff. Then, as the sun rose higher and the north wind began to gather strength and cover the hills with dust, the soldiers came, stirred up the mound to the bottom and broke up the heavy clods, while some galloped their horses back and forth through it, kicking up the loosened soil and throwing it high in the air. Then the wind caught the earth which had been stirred and broken up in this way, and flung it against the entrances of the barbarians' dwellings which faced northwards. The inmates, since their caves could only admit the air from the windward side, soon found their eyes blinded and their lungs choked, as they were forced to inhale a suffocating blast, which was laden with great quantities of dust. For two days they held out with great difficulty, but on the third they surrendered. Their submission strengthened Sertorius's reputation rather than his resources, because his ingenuity had won a victory which could never have been gained by force of arms.

18. So long as Sertorius was campaigning against Metellus, his success was generally attributed to his opponent's advanced age and natural slowness of movement; with these disadvantages Metellus was evidently no match for a daring leader, whose forces were more guerrillas than regular soldiers. But when Pompey crossed the Pyrenees and Sertorius marched to oppose him, both men offered and accepted every possible challenge to their tricks and techniques of generalship. In this contest Sertorius proved himself the master, both in devising schemes to outwit the enemy and in frustrating those that were launched against him. The result was that his fame spread even as far as Rome, where he was acknowledged by common consent to be the most expert commander of his time. It must be remembered that Pompey himself had already won great prestige, and by this time his reputation was at its height.⁸⁸ He had achieved prodigies of generalship on Sulla's behalf, in return for which he had been given the title of The Great, and had been awarded a triumph before he had even grown his first beard. For this reason many of the cities which were subject to Sertorius began to cast an eye in Pompey's direction

and felt tempted to shift their allegiance, but after Pompey's totally unexpected defeat near Lauro⁸⁹ they quickly abandoned these intentions. This was a town which Sertorius was besieging, and Pompey marched with all his forces to relieve it. There was a hill nearby, the command of which was important for an attack on the city, so that Sertorius was anxious to seize it in advance and Pompey to prevent him. Sertorius succeeded in occupying it first, whereupon Pompey, delighted at this move, halted his troops and drew them up in position, believing that he had trapped Sertorius between his army and the city. He also dispatched a messenger to the citizens of Lauro, encouraging them to take heart and seat themselves on their walls, where they could now witness the spectacle of Sertorius being besieged. When Sertorius heard this, he laughed and declared that he would teach Sulla's pupil⁹⁰ – for this was his nickname for Pompey – a lesson, namely that a general needs to look behind him even more carefully than in front. As he said this, he pointed out to the beleaguered townspeople the force of six thousand infantry, which he had left behind in their previous camp when he made his sortie to seize the hill: he had kept them there deliberately so as to attack Pompey's rear, in case he moved against the troops occupying the hill. Pompey did not discover this ruse until it was too late, but having done so he did not dare to attack Sertorius for fear of being encircled in his turn. At the same time he was ashamed to march away and leave the inhabitants of Lauro to their danger, and so he was forced to sit there and watch them being overcome, for the barbarians quickly gave up hope and surrendered. Sertorius spared their lives and let them all go free,⁹¹ but he burned their city to the ground. He did this neither out of anger nor cruelty, for he seems to have indulged such passions less than any other general, but rather with the object of disgracing and humiliating Pompey's admirers:⁹² he wanted to spread the word among the barbarians that although Pompey was almost close enough to warm his hands over the flames of a city which was one of his allies, yet he had done nothing to rescue it.

19. It is true that Sertorius experienced a number of setbacks during this campaign, but he always succeeded in keeping himself and his own forces undefeated, and the reverses he suffered were all inflicted upon his subordinates. And in fact he displayed such skill in recovering from a defeat that he earned more admiration than his victorious opponents, as happened in the battle by the River Sucro against Pompey, and again in the battle near Segontia, when he faced the combined forces of Pompey and Metellus.⁹³ Pompey is said to have precipitated the battle of the Sucro so as to prevent Metellus from having any share in the victory.⁹⁴ Sertorius was equally anxious to

fight it out with Pompey before Metellus came up, and he deployed his army and launched his attack just before darkness fell: he calculated that, as the Roman troops facing him were unfamiliar with the country, they would be as much hampered by the darkness whether they were in pursuit or in rout.

When the two armies closed, it happened that Sertorius, who was stationed on the right wing, found himself engaged not with Pompey but with Afranius,⁹⁵ who commanded the Roman left. Sertorius then heard that the part of his army which faced Pompey was giving ground before his opponent's onslaught, and so he handed over the right wing to his subordinates, and hurried off to rescue his hard-pressed left. He succeeded in rallying the soldiers who were in retreat, and, after encouraging those who were still holding their ground, he launched a counter-attack against the oncoming Pompey, and threw his men back in rout. Pompey himself was wounded in this charge, and only escaped death by an extraordinary stroke of luck.⁹⁶ This was because the Libyans who were fighting with Sertorius, after capturing Pompey's horse which was covered with gold ornaments and boasted a costly harness, became so engrossed in sharing out and quarrelling over the booty that they failed to press home the pursuit. But as soon as Sertorius had crossed over to rescue his left wing, Afranius broke through the troops opposing him and drove them headlong back to their camp; indeed he was following so close on the heels of the fugitives that he entered it with them. By this time it was growing dark and he began to pillage Sertorius's camp, since he had heard nothing of Pompey's defeat and was unable to restrain his soldiers from looting. But meanwhile Sertorius returned from his victory on the other wing, attacked Afranius's troops who were scattered in disorder over the whole camp, and slaughtered them in great numbers. The following morning he again armed his troops and came out to fight, but then he learned that Metellus's army was close at hand. He therefore broke up his order of battle and marched away, declaring that 'If that old woman had not come up, I would have given this boy a good hiding and packed him off to Rome!'⁹⁷

20. Meanwhile, he was greatly distressed by the disappearance of his doe,⁹⁸ because this deprived him of a wonderful means of influencing the barbarians, who at this moment badly needed encouragement. By good fortune some men who were roaming about the country at night on other errands happened to see the doe, recognized her by her colour and caught her. When Sertorius heard of this, he promised the men a large reward if they would say nothing about her capture. Meanwhile, he kept the doe hidden and a few days later appeared in public smiling and cheerful, and declared to the Iberian chieftains that

the gods had foretold a great stroke of good fortune to him in a dream; after which he mounted the tribunal and began to deal with the various petitions that were presented to him. At this moment the doe's keepers released her close by. She caught sight of Sertorius, bounded up and leaped on to the tribunal; then, laying her head on his lap, she licked his right hand as she had been accustomed to do in the past, whereupon Sertorius returned her caresses affectionately and even shed tears. The spectators were dumbfounded at first, and then, breaking into shouts of joy and loud applause, they escorted him to his house. They were convinced that he was beloved of the gods and possessed supernatural powers, and this assurance filled them with hope and confidence for the future.

21. Sertorius had blockaded the enemy so successfully in the plains around Segontia⁹⁹ that they suffered severe hardships, but when the Romans came out to plunder and forage he was forced to give them battle. Both armies fought magnificently. Memmius,¹⁰⁰ the most skilful of Pompey's commanders, was killed where the fighting was hottest. Sertorius meanwhile was carrying all before him, and, cutting down great numbers of the enemy who still held their positions, he pressed on steadily towards Metellus. In spite of his age, the Roman commander was holding his ground and defending himself valiantly, when he was struck by a spear. All the Romans who saw this happen or heard of it were filled with shame at the thought of abandoning their general, and were roused to anger against the enemy. They surrounded Metellus with their shields and carried him out of danger, then turned, launched a furious counter-attack and drove back the Iberians. Victory had now changed sides, and Sertorius needed all his skill to disengage his troops and withdraw them to safety. He therefore retreated to a strong city in the mountains,¹⁰¹ where he could rebuild his army undisturbed, and although he had no intention of withstanding a siege, he set himself to repair the walls and strengthen the gates. This move completely deceived the enemy, who at once settled down to invest the city, which they expected to capture quite easily. In this way the retreating barbarians were allowed to escape without a pursuit, while the Romans took no notice of the reinforcements which were being mobilized for Sertorius in the meanwhile. And mobilized they were, for Sertorius had sent officers to the cities which were under his control with orders to send a messenger to him as soon as they had gathered a large enough body of troops. When the messengers duly reached him, he had no difficulty in breaking through the lines of the besieging troops and joining forces with his new recruits, and, with his army thus strengthened, he once more turned against the enemy and launched a double offensive. He

harassed their supply routes on land by means of outflanking movements, ambushes and surprise attacks from every quarter, and at sea by patrolling the coast with his light pirate craft. As a result of these tactics the Roman commanders were forced to separate, Metellus retreating into Gaul and Pompey spending the winter among the Vaccaei.¹⁰² Here he suffered great hardships through lack of supplies, and wrote to the senate¹⁰³ that he would march his army out of Spain unless they sent him money, since he had already spent all his resources in the campaign he had fought to defend Italy. In fact the rumour was current in Rome that Sertorius would arrive in Italy before Pompey.¹⁰⁴ Such were the lengths to which Sertorius had driven the ablest and most powerful generals of his time.

22. Metellus himself made it quite clear that he feared Sertorius and thought him a great leader, for he issued a proclamation that any Roman who killed Sertorius would receive a reward of a hundred talents of silver and twenty thousand *iugera* of land,¹⁰⁵ and if he were an exile he would be granted permission to return to Rome. By this attempt to purchase Sertorius's death by treachery he plainly revealed that he had given up all hope of overcoming him in open war. And when on one occasion he did gain a victory over Sertorius, he felt so delighted and triumphant at his success that he had himself proclaimed Emperor,¹⁰⁶ and the cities of Iberia received him with sacrifices on their altars when he visited them. It is said that he even allowed himself to be crowned with wreaths and accepted invitations to ceremonial banquets,¹⁰⁷ at which he wore a triumphal robe as he drank his wine, while mechanical effigies of victory were lowered from the ceiling bearing golden crowns and trophies in their hands, and choirs of boys and women sang hymns of victory in his honour. It is not surprising that the people laughed at him, for it was surely ridiculous that he should show such extraordinary pleasure and vanity just because he had gained an advantage over Sertorius and forced him to retreat, while at the same time he referred to him as Sulla's runaway slave and the scum of Carbo's defeated party.

Sertorius, by contrast, showed his magnanimity in a number of ways. First of all he brought together the various senators who had fled from Rome to join his cause, and gave this body the title of senate.¹⁰⁸ From their number he appointed praetors and quaestors, and in all these arrangements he observed the forms of Roman tradition. Secondly, although he made use of the arms, the resources and the cities of the Iberians, he never even discussed the idea of yielding up the authority of Rome in the smallest degree, but always appointed Romans to be their generals and commanders, indicating that his task was to give his fellow-countrymen back their freedom,

not to raise up the Iberians against them. For he was above all a man who loved his country and longed to return home from exile. And yet even when his fortunes were at their lowest, his courage never faltered and he never humbled himself before his enemies. On the other hand, after his victories he several times sent word to Metellus and Pompey to tell them that he was ready to lay down his arms and live as a private citizen, on condition that he would be granted permission to return to Rome. He declared that he would rather live as the meanest citizen in Rome than remain in exile, even if he were proclaimed the ruler of all the rest of the world.¹⁰⁹

It is said that his longing to return was largely inspired by his affection for his mother, who had brought him up after his father's death and to whom he was completely devoted.¹¹⁰ At the moment when his friends in Spain were pressing him to take up the command there¹¹¹ he had just learned of his mother's death, and his grief at the news almost killed him. He lay for seven days in his tent, during which time he would neither give out the password nor allow his friends to see him, and it was only with great difficulty that his fellow-commanders and brother-officers, after surrounding his tent, could prevail upon him to come out, mingle with the soldiers and take part in their operations, which at that time were going well. All this led many people to suppose that Sertorius was a mild-tempered man, whose natural inclinations were for a life of quiet, but who was forced to accept commands quite against his wishes, and who, once he had been compelled by his enemies to resort to violence, took refuge in war as a necessary form of self-defence.¹¹²

23. Yet another example of his magnanimity may be seen in his policy towards Mithridates.¹¹³ In spite of the fall which Sulla had given him, Mithridates had risen to his feet just like a wrestler ready for another bout, and made yet another attempt to seize the province of Asia. At this moment Sertorius's prestige was also at its height and his fame had spread to many countries, so that the traders who came from the West had filled the kingdom of Pontus with tales of his exploits like so much foreign merchandise. Mithridates was eager to send an embassy to him, and in doing this he was led on most of all by the foolish and exaggerated arguments of his flatterers. These men kept comparing Sertorius with Hannibal and Mithridates with Pyrrhus,¹¹⁴ and assured him that the Romans, if they were attacked on both fronts, would find it impossible to hold out against the combined strength of two such men, once the most powerful king in the world was joined by the ablest general. So Mithridates sent envoys to Spain carrying both letters and verbal proposals. The gist of these was that Mithridates promised to supply ships and money for a war against Rome, but in

return he demanded that Sertorius should confirm his title to the sovereignty of the whole of Asia, which he had renounced according to the terms of his treaty with Sulla.¹¹⁵ Sertorius assembled that council which he called a senate, and on this occasion the rest of his advisers urged him to welcome the king's proposals and accept them, since all that was being asked of their party was to grant a name and an empty title to a territory over which they had no control, while in return they would be provided with what they most badly needed. But Sertorius would on no account agree. He said that he had no objection to the king's taking possession of Bithynia and Cappadocia: these were territories which were accustomed to the rule of kings and to which the Romans had no claim. But as for a province which Mithridates had seized and held when the Romans were in full and lawful possession of it,¹¹⁶ which he had lost in war to Fimbria¹¹⁷ and had given up according to a treaty with Sulla, this was a very different matter, and Sertorius declared that he could not consent to its falling into Mithridates's hands again.¹¹⁸ Such power as he himself might wield ought to be used to extend the authority of Rome, and he had no right to extend his own power at her expense. A man of noble spirit, he told them, welcomes victory if he can achieve it with honour, but he will not embrace dishonour even to save his own life.

24. When Mithridates heard this reply, his amazement was apparent to everyone, and we are told that he remarked to his friends: 'This Sertorius has been driven to the shores of the Atlantic, and from there he marks out the frontiers of our kingdom and threatens us with war. What terms do you think he will impose when he is sitting on the Palatine Hill?'¹¹⁹ However, in spite of this a treaty was drawn up and ratified on oath. Mithridates was to take possession of Cappadocia and Bithynia, while Sertorius was to send him a general and troops and would receive in return 3,000 talents and forty ships.¹²⁰ Sertorius therefore sent as general to Asia Marcus Marius,¹²¹ one of the senators who had taken refuge with him. He was helped by Mithridates to capture certain cities in Asia, and when he entered them attended by the Roman fasces and axes, Mithridates followed him in person, voluntarily accepting second rank and the status of an inferior ally. Marius granted some of the cities their freedom and wrote to others to tell them that on Sertorius's authority they would be exempted from taxation. The result was that Asia, which in the meanwhile had once more become infested with Roman tax-gatherers and oppressed by the greed and violence of the soldiers billeted there,¹²² was suddenly inspired by the prospect of better things and longed for the expected change of regime.

25. But meanwhile, in Spain, as soon as the senators and other

members of the elite who had joined Sertorius felt confident that he was a match for their enemies, they forgot their fears, were filled instead by jealousy of Sertorius and became foolishly resentful of his authority.¹²³ They were encouraged by Perpenna,¹²⁴ a man who because of his noble birth was consumed by empty ambitions to hold the supreme command. He began to organize secret meetings with his acquaintances and to rouse their feelings with such malicious questions as these: 'What evil genius has taken control of us all and is hurrying our affairs from bad to worse? We refused to stay at home and take orders from Sulla, when he made himself supreme over land and sea. Instead we banished ourselves to this miserable country, hoping to live as free men, and what have we become? We have turned ourselves into slaves in the bodyguard of this refugee, Sertorius. We call ourselves a senate, and everybody who hears the title laughs at it, and we find ourselves subjected to the same orders and insults and hardships as these Iberians and Lusitanians.' These words had their effect on Perpenna's listeners. Most of them did not openly desert Sertorius, because they were still afraid of his power, but in secret they did their best to hamper his operations and ill-treated the barbarians by imposing heavy punishments and levying exorbitant taxes, always with the excuse that this was done on Sertorius's orders.¹²⁵ The result was that the cities became restive and revolts broke out in several of them, while the men who were sent out to appease and settle these grievances only provoked more outbreaks before they returned, and inflamed the growing spirit of disobedience. It was at this point that Sertorius abandoned his original policy of clemency and moderation and committed a terrible injustice against the sons of the Iberians, who were being educated at Osca.¹²⁶ Some of them he had put to death and others were sold into slavery.

26. Meanwhile, Perpenna had won over a number of accomplices for his conspiracy against Sertorius,¹²⁷ and he now added to their number a senior officer named Manlius.¹²⁸ This Manlius was in love with a handsome boy, and as a proof of his attachment he told him about the conspiracy and said that he could now forget about his other admirers and give all his affections to Manlius, because in a few days' time his lover would be a great man. As it happened the boy preferred another of his admirers named Aufidius,¹²⁹ and passed on to him everything that Manlius had said. Aufidius was astonished when he heard this, for although he had been enlisted in the conspiracy himself, he did not know that Manlius had been. But when the boy mentioned the names of Perpenna, Gracinus¹³⁰ and various others whom Aufidius knew to be engaged in the plot, he became seriously alarmed. He told the boy that there was nothing in the story and warned him to despise Manlius

as a boastful liar; then he went to Perpenna, explained the danger of their situation and urged him to make the attempt at once. The conspirators followed his advice, and they then prepared forged dispatches, arranged for a messenger to bring them and introduced him into Sertorius's presence. The dispatches announced that one of Sertorius's generals had won a victory and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. Sertorius was delighted and offered up a sacrifice to celebrate the good news. Thereupon, Perpenna took advantage of the occasion to invite him to a banquet together with those of his own friends who were present – all of whom were in the plot – and after much pressing he persuaded Sertorius to accept.

Now, all the entertainments which Sertorius consented to attend were conducted in a well-behaved and orderly fashion,¹³¹ since he refused to tolerate any indecency in word or action, and made it a rule that his companions' jokes and amusements should be restrained and inoffensive. But on this occasion, when the drinking was well under way, the guests became deliberately quarrelsome, used obscene language and under the pretence of being drunk began to commit indecencies. All this was done in the hope of provoking Sertorius. It may have been that he was angry at their disorderly behaviour, or perhaps had guessed their intentions from the insolence of their talk and their unusual disrespect for his wishes: at any rate he changed his position on his couch and threw himself on to his back, as if he were neither listening nor paying attention to them. Suddenly Perpenna took a cup of wine, and, as he was drinking it, let it fall with a clatter. This was the pre-arranged signal, whereupon Antonius,¹³² who was reclining above Sertorius on the couch, stabbed him with his sword. Sertorius swung round at the blow and tried to rise and grapple with his assailant, but Antonius threw himself on his chest and seized both his hands. Sertorius could make no move to defend himself and died beneath a hail of blows.¹³³

27. Most of the Iberians immediately deserted the conspirators, sent envoys to Pompey and Metellus and surrendered to them. Perpenna tried to organize a resistance with those who remained, but he made just enough use of Sertorius's resources to cut a contemptible figure and prove conclusively that he was no better at giving orders than he was at obeying them.¹³⁴ He attacked Pompey and was promptly defeated and taken prisoner,¹³⁵ but he could not even endure his final misfortune as a leader should. He had Sertorius's private papers in his possession, and he offered to show Pompey a number of letters written in their own hands by men of consular rank occupying the highest positions in Rome. In these they invited Sertorius to come to Italy, where they assured him that there were many who wished to

overthrow the present regime and change the constitution.¹³⁶ Pompey dealt with this situation in a manner not at all to be expected of a young man, but rather of a statesman of mature and balanced judgement, and by his action he delivered Rome from the alarms and perils of revolution. He collected all the secret correspondence and Sertorius's other papers and had them burned,¹³⁷ without either reading them himself or allowing anyone else to do so. He then had Perpenna executed at once, for fear that uprisings or civil war might break out if the names of Sertorius's correspondents were revealed.

Of Perpenna's fellow-conspirators, some were captured and put to death at Pompey's orders,¹³⁸ while others fled to Africa and were killed by the spears of the Maurusians. Not one of them escaped except for Aufidius, Manlius's rival. Either because he could not be found, or because he was not considered worth looking for, he lived on into old age in some barbarian village, poor and detested by all.¹³⁹

COMPARISON OF SERTORIUS AND EUMENES

1 (*Eumenes* 20). These, then, are the most important things that are known about Eumenes and Sertorius. In comparing them, the first point is that they were both outsiders, foreigners and exiles, who lasted for some time as leaders of a medley of mixed races, of formidable armies and of great powers. It is a distinctive feature of Sertorius that all the allies presented him with his command because of their respect for his reputation,¹ while Eumenes grasped his position by his own actions when many were contending with him for supremacy: it was for justice's sake that people followed Sertorius because they wanted to be ruled, whereas they were driven by expediency to submit to Eumenes' command because they could not be rulers themselves. The one was a Roman ruling Iberians and Lusitanians, the other a man from the Chersonese ruling Macedonians; in the first case those peoples had been slaves to the Romans for a very long time, but the Macedonians were then in the course of reducing all mankind to subjection. Sertorius came to power from a position where he was admired as a senator and a general, whereas Eumenes had been held in scorn as a mere secretary: so Eumenes was not merely operating from a weaker starting-point but also had to deal with greater obstacles in the path of his advance. Eumenes thus faced much open opposition as well as undercover plotting; Sertorius in contrast faced no open threat to his power, and only later did a few of the allies conspire against him in secret. So for the one man it was victory over the enemy that marked the end of his danger, while for the other victory generated danger from those who envied his success.²

2 (*Eumenes* 21). Their achievements in command are equally matched and closely parallel: the difference was that Eumenes loved war and conflict, whereas Sertorius's taste was for peace and calm. Eumenes had the chance to retire from the fray and live a safe and honoured existence, but preferred to spend his time risking his life in fighting with the most powerful men of his day; Sertorius did not want a life of action or trouble, but was forced to fight for his own survival against people who would not let him live at peace. If Eumenes had withdrawn from struggling for first place and been content with a

subordinate role, Antigonus would have been delighted to have him on his side;³ Pompey would not even let Sertorius live in retirement.⁴ So Eumenes' warfare was initially his voluntary choice, while Sertorius's command was forced upon him because others were making war on him. One can define the one as a war-lover, valuing greater power above his own safety, and the other as a man of war, using warfare to secure that safety.

The one man's death struck him unawares, the other in full expectation that it was coming;⁵ so in the one case it was a mark of his good nature, for he was placing trust in his friends, in the other of his weakness, for he tried to escape capture and could not. Sertorius's death, then, did not diminish the glory of his life, for he suffered from his allies what no enemy had been able to inflict. Eumenes in contrast had been unable to escape capture through flight, then wanted to live on even in captivity and could neither avoid nor accept death properly. The victor had taken his body: through his beggings and pleadings Eumenes made him master of his spirit too.⁶

LUCULLUS

INTRODUCTION TO LUCULLUS

This is one of the earliest of the Parallel Lives. Together with its companion *Cimon*, it was probably the second, third or fourth pair of the series.¹

Lucullus and the fifth-century Athenian Cimon certainly had much in common. Both were renowned for their victories over formidable barbarian adversaries; both fell foul of more demagogic politicians at home; both had question-marks over their private lives. But it may still seem surprising that, with so many obvious heroes to pick from, Plutarch's choice should have fallen on Lucullus so early. Part of the reason becomes clear in the introduction to the pair, where Plutarch tells a story of his home-town Chaeronea (*Cim.* 1–2). A Roman cohort had once been wintering there, and its captain had fallen in love with a handsome young man called Damon, who rejected his advances. It seemed that the captain was about to turn to force: 'that was the sad state of our country at the time, neglected because she was so small and so poor.' So Damon enlisted a group of young friends. Fired with alcohol, they set upon the captain and his companions, and cut them down in the market-place. The terrified town-council immediately condemned the youths to death; they responded by bursting in on the magistrates and killing them as well. Lucullus happened to be nearby with an army, and he came up to the city to investigate. On discovering the facts, he exonerated the city and removed the unsatisfactory garrison. The city persuaded Damon to return, then took him by surprise and killed him in the baths.² Strange ghosts and visions haunted the place for years afterwards. And Chaeronea's dangers were not over. A Roman informer indicted the whole town for the murder of the captain and his men – the unfriendly neighbouring city of Orchomenus was behind it – and the trial took place before the governor of Macedonia. Lucullus again played a crucial part, with a written testimonial setting out the facts, and Chaeronea was acquitted. The grateful town erected a statue in Lucullus's honour. And now,

Plutarch says, this Life is his own equivalent.

One need not doubt the local stimulus. Plutarch was a most loyal citizen of Chaeronea (General Intro. I); even at a distance of nearly two hundred years, the gratitude sounds genuine. Yet there is perhaps more to it. The choice of Roman heroes for the early Lives falls into something of a pattern: Scipio (presumably Scipio Aemilianus, the statesman and intellectual of the mid second century), Lucullus, Marcellus, Cicero – these were four of the first five, and the other one may well have been Flamininus.³ All had an affection for Greece and Greek culture – even Marcellus, who ransacked the Greek city of Syracuse but at least did so out of genuine affection for Greek art.⁴ All of them, in fact, were Plutarch's sort of person: public men, who accepted the responsibility of the talented to serve their states; but also men of intellect and culture, men who would feel the pull of another, quieter, more civilized style of life.

In Lucullus's case, the pull eventually became too great, and his final years were spent in torpor, luxury and excess: too old (he thought) for statesmanship, he lived the life of the glutton and the roué instead. Or so, at least, people claimed.⁵ This drift into retirement was naturally essential to any moral evaluation, and Plutarch was in a difficult position. His own view was very clear: even in old age, an able man has no right to turn his back on public life, but must continue to do what service he can; and a drift into torpor and luxury is the most undignified retirement of all. That is set out very clearly in the essay *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* Lucullus himself serves as a powerful example in that essay – and a wholly negative one (785f–786a, 792b–c).⁶

Yet too strident a disapproval would sit uncomfortably in this Life. It was against Plutarch's principles, for he favours a sort of ethical generosity in telling the truth. He articulates this clearly in the introduction to this very pair:

Lucullus himself gave Chaeronea a true testimonial, and he would not have wished to receive a false and counterfeit account of his deeds as a reward. Our procedure is like that of a portrait-painter. When he finds a subject which is beautiful, full of appeal, but with a slight blemish, we expect him neither to suppress this completely nor to reproduce it with too much attention to precise detail: the latter procedure is as ugly as the former is unfaithful. In just the same way it is hard, perhaps indeed impossible, to find a man's life which is altogether pure and blameless, and we must round out a true picture, just as if it were a likeness, by dwelling on the good things. Sometimes passion or political necessity produces mistakes or flaws, but we should regard these as failings in virtue rather than as genuinely evil traits, and we should not be too eager or assiduous in drawing attention to them in our narrative. We should simply feel shame on behalf of human nature, if it has produced no character that is purely good or unequivocally virtuous.

And this is indeed a natural pair to make the point, for – as Plutarch has there just said – Lucullus deserves a generous reward for his service to Chaeronea. This is a tribute to his memory, and it would be ungracious to leave it on an ugly note.

The way he handled the problem is interesting, and shows how closely, in this case at least, he adhered to those principles of *Cimon* 2. The pairing with *Cimon* itself helps: Cimon too had a shady private life, and the scandal in his case was a good deal less respectable than in the case of Lucullus – incest with his loose-living sister, a series of affairs, not to mention lack of education. And all that in the first chapter of the narrative of *Cimon* (4): an astonishing way to begin a basically sympathetic portrait, but one which immediately establishes private lapses as a typical concomitant of public achievement. Then the treatment of the retirement itself is a good deal less strident than the tones of *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* He does not conceal it: indeed, some six chapters are devoted to it (38–43); as he had said at *Cimon* 2, one should not suppress such things. Nor does he play down the moral issue. His disapproval of the banqueting is especially clear (ch. 40), and the section is introduced by a long debate where the case for and against such retirement is aired (ch. 38). Yet the balance of that chapter is interestingly generous: much more space is given to excuse than to denunciation, and the criticisms are devalued by giving them to biased rivals. ‘Here he was, abandoning himself to this life of pleasure and extravagance: did he not realize that he was too old for dissipation, not for politics or command?’ But that is what ‘the followers of Pompey and Crassus’ said. It is what Plutarch would have said too, but he does not say it here.⁷

Hellenism also helps. Plutarch is always generous to lovers of Greece and Greeks, and several times in these closing chapters he goes out of his way to include that stress. He has indeed prepared it earlier, with specific acts of generosity to Greeks, as well as with a more general emphasis on Lucullus’s civilized justice in dealing with subject states and individuals.⁸ Now it is Greek visitors he is regaling in ch. 41 (the story does not depend on it, and Plutarch did not need to say so); the scholars who visit his library in ch. 42 are again Greeks – his house is ‘a genuine home from home for the visitors to Rome, a pavilion of Greek culture’. Then Plutarch stresses his interest in Greek philosophy, a passage which (like that on the libraries) has no particular connection with his retirement, and in fact uses material relating to a much earlier period of his life.⁹ Plutarch too could have made these points much earlier, but prefers to delay them to here: this is where they are most effective, and the effect is to distract attention from the torpor and the gluttony and to redirect it towards the culture

and the scholarship. This is a civilized retreat, not a self-indulgent wallow. Those indeed are the tones in which he had introduced the theme in the opening chapter of the *Life*: ‘In old age he allowed his intellect to find rest and leisure in philosophy after a life full of rivalry and contests, and cultivated the contemplative side of his mind, curtailing his ambition and granting it a timely demise after his struggle with Pompey.’

The final illness itself tells a story. ‘Cornelius Nepos claims that it was not age or disease that took away his mind, but it was caused by drugs, administered by one of his freedmen called Callisthenes. The drugs (says Nepos) were given him to win his affections for Callisthenes, for this was supposed to be their effect; but in fact they weakened and destroyed his intellect, so that even before his death his brother Marcus had to take over his property to administer’ (ch. 43). A sad end, though one that is partly retrieved by the popular affection shown at the funeral. But it is also an end that ironically recalls many of his best qualities. The brotherly closeness is one thing; that is the note on which he ends the *Life*, just as (once again) he had included it in the first chapter. And ‘Callisthenes’, the misguided freedman, sounds like a Greek: the philhellenism has gone awry. The story even recalls some of that story of Chaeronea – an erotic liaison of superior and inferior which goes murderously wrong. In several ways we have come full circle, and the closing chapters recall the opening, not merely of *Lucullus* itself, but also of *Cimon* and of the pair. It is a trait of Plutarch’s writing to recall a hero’s glorious moments as he declines and dies, and there is something of that here.

The *Life* is early in the series, but Plutarch was probably over fifty when he wrote it,¹⁰ and he was already an accomplished and experienced writer. It is striking how many of the distinctive qualities of the *Lives* are already visible. The narrative is full of colour and vitality, with a strong dramatic sense: one need look only at the accounts of Cyzicus (chs. 9–11), or Tigranocerta (chs. 26–8), or the deaths of the women (ch. 18) to see the assurance of Plutarch’s technique. Particularly arresting are his strong use of visuality (the Roman army in the distance at Cyzicus: ch. 9; Tigranes riding into action at Tigranocerta: ch. 28, or later his parting from his son; Mithridates hearing the news of the battle: ch. 29); and of direct speech, more frequent in this *Life* than in many others, and used to considerable effect (for instance in portraying crowd psychology at chs. 14 and 34). There was an underlying problem in the comparison, for *Cimon* is less than half the length of *Lucullus*, and Plutarch had access to much richer detail on Lucullus’s battles than on Cimon’s. But Plutarch does not try to compensate by squeezing the *Lucullus* narrative, which builds tension slowly and most effectively.

The comparison itself is handled with aplomb. *Cimon* begins with its subject's private excesses and eccentricities, just as *Lucullus* ends; in *Cimon* too that early section includes material that could easily have been treated elsewhere, but the resulting chiasmic structure is a satisfying one. Other themes run through the pair, with one hero discreetly serving as the other's foil. In both, for instance, we find strong athletic imagery (*Cim.* 13, *Luc.* 32, cf. *Comp. Cim.-Luc.* 2–3). That is appropriate, with both men competing not merely with their enemies but with their colleagues or predecessors; but in *Cimon* such competitiveness is salutary (*Cim.* 5, 8, 18), in *Lucullus* it goes astray (ch. 30 and n. 158). Both men inspire high hopes in their menaced followers; Cimon responds, Lucullus does not (*Cim.* 5, 16; *Luc.* 38 and n. 213, 42 and n. 234). Wealth, used either for self-indulgence or for the good of the state, is another recurrent theme, and here Lucullus is clearly inferior to Cimon, as Plutarch makes explicit in the *Comparison*.

Lucullus's own characterization seems bland to our taste, and it is less psychologically engaged than we find with some of Plutarch's other figures: in *Cicero*, for instance, the struggle between the temptations of retirement and achievement is made more agonizing; Lucullus's parents show some of the same dissipated traits as their son, but the theme of inherited characteristics is not pursued as insistently as in *Antony* (*Ant.* 1, 4, 28, 87 and Intro. *Ant.*). Yet the characterization is not without its interest. It is noticeable how many traits Lucullus shares with his great antagonists Mithridates and Tigranes. The strength of all three is often genuine and substantial, but there is also overconfidence, braggadocio, bluster; even as Lucullus exploits the flaws in others, we can see the vulnerability in himself.¹¹ 'It all confirms how an ordinary mentality cannot stay rational amid great success, just as many human bodies cannot stand great quantities of unwatered wine' (ch. 25). The extreme form in which Plutarch puts the generalization suits Tigranes more than Lucullus, but the Roman too has something of the same qualities, and they are disquieting. Downfall must surely loom.

Yet that downfall is subtler than we may yet expect, for the overconfidence becomes disastrous only when combined with other traits that are more specific to Lucullus, particularly his failure to read or control his own men. Leadership highlights his weakest as well as his strongest characteristics, and, as often in Plutarch, the virtues and the flaws are connected. His toughness as a disciplinarian is initially a strength (ch. 7); yet he always shows more military than human insight, and soon he is overconfident simply because he does not realize how weary and disillusioned his men have become (ch. 14). Their brooding disaffection is felt with increasing clarity, together

with his inability to sense it or respond.¹² ‘Perhaps Lucullus was unfortunate in this respect, perhaps he simply lacked a general’s most important gift. If only he had possessed that as well as all those other massive qualities – his bravery, his conscientiousness, his insight, his feeling for justice!’ (ch. 36). Yet even that conscientious justice and humanity now emerges as two-edged. He may protect the Greek cities from depredation (ch. 32), just as, for good military reasons, he passes by some richly stocked outposts (ch. 24). Good qualities, of course – but the troops do not thank him for them, and his very strengths leave him vulnerable.¹³

So Lucullus ‘was not the man to court the ordinary soldier: if anything looked likely to please the men under his command, he was inclined to regard it as demeaning to himself and a threat to his position. And, most important of all, he could not get on with his equals, men of power and distinction. He disdainfully regarded them all as men of straw compared with himself’ (ch. 33). That final emphasis is a telling one. These ‘equals’, the ‘men of power and distinction’, have not figured much in the narrative for some time; we have heard a little of the ‘demagogues’ at home,¹⁴ who have caused Lucullus some problems, but that is all. Now the most formidable demagogue of all is about to emerge, Publius Clodius; and he is not far away at Rome, but there on the spot. This is the point where the popular brooding sharpens to mutiny, for the men have found their leader. At home, too, it is precisely those weaknesses that leave him open to the ploys of less scrupulous opponents in politics, and this in turn does something to make the final retirement more understandable. Again the treatment might be subtler: in *Pompey*, for instance, or *Antony*, Plutarch has more penetrating analyses of the relationship of a man’s strengths as a general and weaknesses in politics. But even in *Lucullus* the treatment is not without its interest, or its human sympathy.

In one way *Lucullus* was a natural Life to take early in the series, as it required little knowledge of Roman politics and political life, something which we can see developing as the Lives continued.¹⁵ The few political references in the Life are duly rather crude and unsophisticated,¹⁶ though some of the simplification may be deliberate, for the interest rests on the campaigns. Here he was pretty well informed. His main source is clearly Sallust’s *Histories*, the detailed annalistic account of Roman history from 78 BCE onwards. Plutarch perhaps knew it in the original, less likely in a Greek translation;¹⁷ we can often see that he is following its detail fairly closely.¹⁸ He quotes it twice, once in criticism (ch. 11), once apparently with respect (33).

Even in their fragmentary state we can see that the *Histories* offered

a rich account of the fighting:: they also intruded a more searching exploration of wider historical themes – Roman imperialism, for instance (Mithridates' letter to king Phraates delivers a scathing attack: fr. 4.69 M. = 67 McG., though its effect was perhaps qualified by an ambivalent presentation of Mithridates elsewhere in Sallust's account). Not that Plutarch would have found the tone congenial. Sallust's other works suggest that he would have been unforgiving in treating the moral deficiencies of the nobility, and some aspects of Lucullus's political style would not have won his acclaim. There were charges of bribery, for instance (*Hist.* 4.71 M. = 68 McG., cf. n. 173); and it would not be surprising if Plutarch's story of Lucullus and Praecia (chs. 5–6) owed its origin to Sallust, with his penchant for immorality and for women of vigour and vice (cf. his Sempronia in the *War with Catiline* 25).

Nor would Sallust have been generous about Lucullus's final decline into torpor and luxury.¹⁹ Another passage in the *War with Catiline* (13) suggests the flavour:

Why mention things which are incredible unless one has seen them? Mountains destroyed, seas paved over, not just by one individual but by several? These men seem almost to have mocked their wealth; they could have used it honourably, they preferred to abuse it in vice. And other things were there in the same measure, lust, gluttony, the desire for every other form of luxury; men playing the woman, women hawking their honour to anyone who wanted it; the scouring of every land and sea for the table; sleeping before tiredness; not waiting for hunger or thirst, for cold or fatigue, but anticipating everything in sensuousness.

The prurience would not have attracted Plutarch, and he would anyway have felt the denigration too complete. But he was well able to criticize his material, and preferred the milder tones we have seen.

Some other negative emphases in the *Life* may also go back to Sallust, possibly the overconfidence (*Hist.* 4.73 M. = 77 McG.), more certainly the stress on the failure to control the troops: that is shown by the passage quoted in ch. 33 – Sallust traced the beginning of the dissent back to Cyzicus and Amisus. But Sallust still seems to have given a measured overall verdict on Lucullus's generalship: 'very eager to expand the empire, so people thought, but good in other respects' (4.70 M. = 69 McG.); and he clearly did not minimize the formidable qualities of the enemies Mithridates and Tigranes. He would not necessarily have been any kinder to those at home who tried to impede Lucullus's success: Plutarch's dismissive references to 'the demagogues' may owe something to Sallust's original.²⁰ *War with Catiline* 38 conveys the tone: defenders of the senate and of the people were as bad as one another, parading the public good and struggling for themselves.

Sallust would not be the only source, though he was the most important. Plutarch probably knew Cornelius Nepos's biography of Lucullus, which he quotes in the final chapter. This Life was presumably one of Nepos's series of 'Roman generals', and that whole series may have been fuller than the extant, skimpy Lives of foreigners. Other sources are harder to identify. Perhaps Plutarch glanced (or asked an assistant to glance) at other historical sources, Livy for instance, whom he quotes at chs. 28 and 31; but it is hard to find clear signs of this, and even those quotations might be second-hand (or perhaps owed to a research assistant, General Intro. III). The same goes for Strabo's *Historical Resume*, also quoted in ch. 28. The references to Sulla's memoirs (chs. 1, 4, 23) are more likely to be first-hand, but that work would be useful only for the very beginnings of Lucullus's career. Some have thought that a poem lies in the background, possibly that composed by the poet Archias on Lucullus's campaigns.²¹ That is possible, but not very likely.²² When preparing *Cicero*, Plutarch read fairly extensively in Cicero himself, and here several speeches, notably *de imperio Cn. Pompei*, *pro Murena* and *pro Archia*, would have offered him some material; but there is no real sign of Plutarch exploiting this. Nor is it probable that Plutarch knew Cicero's *Lucullus* at first hand, though he certainly knew of its existence and had some idea of its content.²³

Oral tradition would, as usual, have provided some good stories (Intro., p. xxxv): of the heifer who came for sacrifice, perhaps (ch. 24),²⁴ or the spectacular deaths of the women (ch. 18), or some of the stories of Lucullus's self-indulgence in old age; that story of Damon at the beginning of *Cimon* is also surely based on local Chaeronean tradition. Some material will also be owed to Plutarch's general cultural knowledge – the notice of Lucullus's libraries, or his art collection, or his home as a 'pavilion of Greek culture', or the terms of the dispute between Philo and Antiochus of Ascalon (ch. 42). Plutarch may well have read Antiochus's own book *On the Gods*, which he quotes for an incidental remark in ch. 28; but he would have read it for its philosophy, and probably years earlier.

It is all welded most harmoniously, and though few will claim *Lucullus* as the most thoughtful or sensitive of the Lives, it is certainly one of the most readable and vigorous.

LUCULLUS

[c. 117–57/6 BCE]

1. Lucullus's grandfather was a consular,¹ and his maternal uncle was the Metellus who won the cognomen Numidicus.² As for his parents, his father was convicted of embezzlement,³ while his mother, Caecilia,⁴ was notorious for her wild lifestyle.

Even before seeking any office or entering public life, the young Lucullus launched his career by prosecuting his father's accuser, the augur Servilius:⁵ Lucullus had found evidence that he was guilty of some public crime. People at Rome thought this a splendid thing and they kept talking about the trial as if it were Lucullus's hour of glory. They anyway regarded prosecution as a noble form of activity, even if there were no specific reason: they liked to see their young men taking on wrongdoers, like well-bred young pups latching on to wild beasts. But this particular trial gave rise to such fierce antagonism that some people were wounded or even killed, and Servilius was acquitted.

Lucullus developed a fine speaking style in both Latin and Greek. In fact, when Sulla was writing up his own achievements⁶ he dedicated the work to Lucullus, saying that he would compose and arrange the material better. For Lucullus was not just the sort of skilled speaker who could respond readily when the need arose; he was not one of those who treat the forum 'like frenzied tunny, threshing the deep'⁷ but elsewhere are 'stale, uncultured and struck dumb'; but from his youth he applied himself to the harmonious blend of education that is called 'liberal' and is directed towards what is fine and honourable. In old age he allowed his intellect to find rest and leisure in philosophy after a life full of rivalry and contests, and cultivated the contemplative side of his mind, curtailing his ambition and granting it a timely demise after his struggle with Pompey. There is another story, too, told about his intellectual tastes. Hortensius the forensic orator,⁸ Sisenna the historian⁹ and the young Lucullus once had a joking exchange which turned serious. They proposed that he write a prose work or a poem, in Greek or in Latin; he agreed to produce an extended work on the Marsic War,¹⁰ the form to be decided by lot. It would seem that the lot fell on a Greek prose work, for a history of the Marsic War in Greek is still extant.

He was on very good terms with his brother Marcus.¹¹ There are many indications of this, but the Romans talk particularly about the earliest. Our Lucullus was the elder brother, but he was not willing to take a public office on his own, preferring to wait for Marcus's time to arrive. This so won over the Roman people that he was elected aedile in his absence, along with Marcus.¹²

2. Lucullus fought as a young man in the Marsic War, and often showed his daring and intelligence; but it was more his reliability and mildness which impressed Sulla, who from the beginning employed him for the most important duties. These included the minting of coin, and most of the currency minted in the Peloponnese during the Mithridatic War¹³ was his responsibility. The coins were called 'Luculleans'¹⁴ after him, and they lasted a very long time, for the needs of the military in wartime ensured them a quick circulation.

Later Sulla was based in Athens¹⁵ and had control of the land, but the enemy's naval supremacy deprived him of his supplies from the sea. He sent Lucullus to Egypt and Libya with orders to bring ships. It was the depth of winter, and Lucullus sailed with just three light, Greek brigs and the same number of small Rhodian galleys. He faced a vast ocean and great numbers of enemy ships that were cruising everywhere in triumph. Yet he put into Crete and brought the island over;¹⁶ he found Cyrene in turmoil after continuous tyrannies and warfare,¹⁷ and he did a lot of good there. As he was establishing a new constitution he reminded the city of a remark that Plato had once made to the people of Cyrene, something that amounted to a prophecy for their future. It seems that they were begging him to write laws for them and give the people a form of well-ordered constitution, and he said that it was difficult to legislate for the Cyrenaeans when they were so prosperous. Nothing, he went on, was harder to rule than the person who appears to be prosperous, and nothing more receptive of discipline than the person whose wings Fortune has clipped.¹⁸ Now, too, this rendered the Cyrenaeans more receptive to Lucullus's legislation.

He sailed from there to Egypt. On his voyage he lost most of his ships when pirates suddenly appeared, but he himself escaped and arrived at Alexandria in style. Indeed, the whole Egyptian fleet sailed out to meet him, sumptuously decorated, just as they used to do when a king was sailing into harbour. Then the young King Ptolemy¹⁹ welcomed him. Among other marvellous displays of friendship and goodwill, he insisted that he reside and eat in the palace: that was the first invitation of its kind to a foreign visitor. Ptolemy also quadrupled the allowance for expenses that he had made to other visitors. Lucullus wanted nothing for himself beyond essentials, and did not

even accept any gift, though Ptolemy sent him presents worth 80 talents. It is said that he did not even travel up the river to Memphis, nor visit any of the other famous marvels of Egypt:²⁰ these, he thought, were appropriate for a tourist with time to spare for luxuries, not for one like himself who had left his general in the open, encamped right up against the enemy's battlements.

3. Ptolemy took fright at the prospect of war and refused the alliance, but he gave Lucullus ships to escort him as far as Cyprus. As Lucullus departed, Ptolemy embraced him, and as a mark of friendship and respect he gave him a priceless emerald set in gold. Lucullus at first tried to refuse, then Ptolemy showed him that its seal carried a portrait of the king himself. That made Lucullus apprehensive about refusing it: if he gave the impression of total hostility as he left, there might well be a plot against him on the voyage. As he sailed along the African seaboard he collected many ships from the coastal cities, excluding only those that had been involved in piracy, and then he crossed to Cyprus. There he discovered that the enemy ships were waiting in ambush for him off the headlands. At this news he drew up all the boats on shore, then wrote around to the cities with instructions about winter billeting and provisions, just as if he was going to stay there till spring. Suddenly it was possible to sail: he rapidly hauled the ships down and put out to sea, then drove on with sails furled and low during the day, and under full canvas at night, till he arrived safely at Rhodes. The Rhodians gave him more ships, then he persuaded the men of Cos and Cnidus to abandon Mithridates and join in a campaign against Samos. Without any outside help he also drove the king's forces from Chios, then arrested Epigonus, the tyrant of Colophon, and liberated his city.

By now Mithridates had already left Pergamum and drawn his forces together into Pitane. Fimbria²¹ had surrounded him on the land side and had begun a siege, so Mithridates turned his eyes to the sea and began to collect and summon all his naval forces. He had no intention of joining battle yet with the audacious and triumphant Fimbria. Fimbria realized this, and also saw that he was no match for Mithridates' fleet. He sent to Lucullus, asking him to bring his ships and join in destroying this most hated of kings, Rome's greatest enemy: at last they had a hold on Mithridates and even had him trapped, this great prize that had cost so many trials and sufferings, and they must not let him escape. If he were captured, no one would take more of the glory than the man who had stood in the way of his flight and had seized him as he ran away. Now Fimbria himself had driven him from the land while Lucullus was barring the sea, and it would be both men's victory: people at Rome would regard those

famous exploits of Sulla at Orchomenus and Chaeronea²² as trivial in comparison. And such talk was not unreasonable, for it was evident that, if Lucullus had only agreed to bring his fleet the short distance along the coast and join the blockade of the harbour, it would have brought the war to an end and saved everyone countless sufferings. Perhaps he was concerned to do the just thing for Sulla's cause, and placed more weight on this than any personal or public advantage; perhaps he was repelled by the dreadful Fimbria, who had only recently murdered a man who was his friend and general in his lust for power; or perhaps it was some sort of divine fortune that led him to spare Mithridates and preserve him to be his own great adversary. Anyway, he refused, and let Mithridates sail away and mock Fimbria's force. He then won an initial victory himself when some of the king's ships appeared near Lectum in the Troad; then he caught sight of Neoptolemus²³ lying in wait for him at Tenedos with a bigger force, and he sailed against them in front of the rest of his fleet. He was embarked on a Rhodian pentekonter²⁴ captained by Damagoras, a friend of the Romans, who was very experienced in naval warfare. Neoptolemus came dashing towards him through the waves and ordered his helmsman to ram the ship. Damagoras was afraid of the massive royal vessel and its jagged bronze-plated battering-ram, and did not dare to make contact head on; instead, he rapidly wheeled the ship round, gave orders to back water and rode the momentum of the collision at the stern, where the ship sunk low into the water. Thus the blow did no damage, hitting the ship above the waterline. Then the rest of the fleet arrived, and Lucullus gave orders to attack. After many remarkable exploits he routed the enemy and set off in close pursuit of Neoptolemus.

4. Next Lucullus made his way to the Chersonese, where he joined up with Sulla just as he was about to cross the Hellespont. He ensured that the crossing was safe, and helped in transporting the troops. Terms were soon agreed,²⁵ and Mithridates departed for the Black Sea while Sulla imposed fines of 20,000 talents on Asia. Lucullus had orders to exact this money and use it to mint currency, and the cities apparently found in him some consolation for Sulla's harshness; at least he carried through so severe and grim a commission with integrity, justice and even some humanity. Mytilene was in open revolt, but Lucullus wished to be generous and only impose a moderate punishment for their misdemeanour concerning Manius.²⁶ When, however, he saw their ill-starred obstinacy, he sailed against them, won a battle, hemmed them within their walls and laid the city under siege. Then he sailed away to Elaea²⁷ openly and in daylight, only to return stealthily at night and lie in wait by the city. The

Mytileneans rushed out in no sort of order, rashly confident that they would seize and plunder the deserted camp, but Lucullus fell on them, taking many prisoner and killing five hundred of those who resisted. He also took six thousand slaves and countless amounts of other booty.

He had virtually no part in the dreadful ills that beset Italy, those ills which Sulla and Marius furnished in abundant variety for their fellow-men.²⁸ Instead, a sort of divine fortune kept him lingering at his business in the East. Still, Sulla treated him no less well than his other friends; indeed, they were on such good terms that (as I have said)²⁹ Sulla dedicated his memoirs to him, and on his death³⁰ made Lucullus rather than Pompey guardian of his son. This would seem to have been the origin of the rift and jealousy between the two men, for both were young and both burning for glory.

5. Shortly after Sulla's death, Lucullus was consul with Marcus Cotta, in the 176th Olympiad.³¹ By now many people were once more trying to stir up the Mithridatic War, and Cotta himself said that it had not ended, only paused. For that reason Lucullus was disappointed when he drew Cisalpine Gaul as his province, for it held no prospect of great exploits; he was particularly goaded by the good reputation Pompey was winning in Spain,³² for if the Spanish War ended he would look the only possible choice as general against Mithridates. So, when Pompey wrote asking for money and saying that he would otherwise abandon Spain and Sertorius and bring his forces back to Italy,³³ Lucullus was most active in making sure that the money was sent, and that Pompey should have no pretext at all for returning during his consulship; for if he did the whole city would be in his power. His presence alone, backed by so great an army, would make certain of that.

Lucullus was also a personal enemy of Cethegus,³⁴ who was master of the whole state at the time thanks to his consistently populist speeches and actions. Lucullus was disgusted by his lifestyle, which was brimful of disreputable love-affairs and violence and outrage. His relations with Cethegus amounted to open warfare, but his relations with another popular leader, Lucius Quinctius,³⁵ were better. Quinctius was attacking Sulla's dispositions and trying to disturb the status quo, but Lucullus adopted a blend of private persuasion and public admonition which deflected him from this attempt and quieted his ambition. This was the most diplomatic and constructive way possible to handle the beginning of a great malady.³⁶

6. Meanwhile news arrived of the death of Octavius, governor of Cilicia.³⁷ Many were greedy for the province and courted Cethegus as the man who had the power to secure it for them. Lucullus was not

particularly concerned about Cilicia itself, but reckoned that, if he could get a province so close to Cappadocia, then no one else would be sent to fight Mithridates. Thus he tried every ploy he knew to prevent anyone else from obtaining Cilicia; eventually necessity forced him to act out of character³⁸ and adopt a course that was undignified and disreputable, but certainly effective. There was a woman called Praecia, the talk of Rome for her beauty, glamour and style. In most respects she was no better than a courtesan, but she did have the trait of exploiting her companions and acquaintances to help the political aspirations of her friends: thus she added to the rest of her charms the impression of being a good friend and an effective one, and so she had great power. Among her devotees and lovers was Cethegus, now at the height of his reputation and master of Rome. So control of the city effectively passed to Praecia, for nothing could be done without Cethegus's support, and that depended on Praecia's instructions. Now Lucullus won his way into Praecia's favour with gifts and blandishments – and it was anyway no small prize for so majestic and magnificent a lady to be seen working for Lucullus; and immediately Lucullus had Cethegus singing his praises and working to secure him the province.

As soon as he got it, there was no further need to call on Praecia or Cethegus, for all alike came pressing the Mithridatic War upon him. No one else, they said, was better able to bring it to its conclusion: his only possible rivals for the command were Pompey and Metellus,³⁹ and Pompey was still engaged with Sertorius while Metellus's vigour was sapped by age.⁴⁰ Still, his colleague Cotta pressed the senate insistently, and was sent out with a naval force to guard the Propontis and defend Bithynia.

7. Lucullus now crossed to Asia,⁴¹ with a legion he had raised himself in Italy. When he arrived there he took over the rest of his forces, which were in a sorry state. All had long been corrupted by luxury and greed, and in particular the 'Fimbriani' had become used to anarchy and were virtually uncontrollable. These were the men who had joined Fimbria in killing the consul and general Flaccus,⁴² then had betrayed Fimbria himself to Sulla.⁴³ They were self-willed and lawless, but also formidable, tough and experienced fighters; yet even these had their arrogance knocked out of them by Lucullus, and he disciplined the rest as well. This was the first time, it seems, that they experienced a genuine leader and general; the rest of the time they had demagogues rather than commanders, and had grown used to soldiering on their own terms.

The enemy's position was as follows. Mithridates was rather like most sophists: at the outset he was full of ostentatious bluster, rising

to confront Rome with a force that had plenty of showy splendour but no real substance; but his ridiculous failure had taught him a lesson, and now that he was preparing for war a second time he was concentrating his contingents to form a genuinely effective force. He dispensed with the usual features of a barbarian army – the mix of nationalities and their threats in a host of languages – and he also abandoned the gilded and jewelled weaponry that contributed less to the owners' safety than to the victors' spoils. Instead, he forged swords on the Roman pattern and welded heavy shields, and collected horses that were exercised better than they were decorated; he mustered 120,000 infantry⁴⁴ and organized them on the pattern of the Roman legion; there were 16,000 cavalry and a hundred scythed four-horse chariots as well. Then his ships⁴⁵ were not fitted out with gold-roofed pavilions or concubines' baths or luxurious women's quarters. Instead, they were heavy with weapons and missiles and money.

This was his force as he invaded Bithynia.⁴⁶ And it was not merely the cities there which welcomed him back with delight. All Asia was possessed by the return of the evils of old, once more suffering intolerably at the hands of Roman moneylenders and tax-gatherers.⁴⁷ Later Lucullus was to drive them out⁴⁸ like rapacious Harpies who were seizing the people's food, but for the moment he tried to see if simple advice could make them more moderate. He tried too to quell the various popular revolts, for almost nowhere was peaceful.

8. While Lucullus was thus engaged, Cotta thought that this was his own opportunity for action, and prepared to fight Mithridates. Many were reporting that Lucullus was on his way, and was already encamped in Phrygia; but Cotta thought that his triumphal procession was as good as won, and was eager to press on with battle before Lucullus could have any part in it. He promptly suffered a severe defeat on both land and sea, losing sixty ships with their crews, and 4,000 infantry.⁴⁹ He was himself shut up in Chalcedon and besieged, and began to look to action from Lucullus as his only hope. Some urged Lucullus to ignore Cotta and press on, arguing that this was the way to catch Mithridates' kingdom defenceless. That was a particularly popular view with the troops, who were furious at the thought that Cotta's poor strategy should not merely destroy himself and his own men, but should rob them too of the bloodless victory which was in their hands. Lucullus called them together, and told them it was better to save a single Roman from the enemy than capture everything the enemy possessed. But he gave a different reply to Archelaus,⁵⁰ who had been Mithridates' general in Boeotia, had then defected to the Romans and was with them on the campaign. Archelaus now assured Lucullus that he had only to appear in Pontus

to gain control of everything. Lucullus reminded him that hunters were not accustomed to ignore the beasts and make for their empty lairs, and he was no more cowardly than they were. So saying, he led the way forward against Mithridates, with 30,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry.

When however he caught sight of the enemy, he was astonished by their numbers, and his inclination was to avoid battle and begin a war of attrition; but Marius, sent from Sertorius in Spain with a force to help Mithridates,⁵¹ confronted Lucullus and challenged him to fight. Lucullus drew up his troops as if to fight a full-scale battle; then, just as the two sides were about to engage, suddenly the heavens split open, with no apparent meteorological reason, and a large blazing object was seen falling to earth between the two camps, its shape like a pitcher and its colour like molten silver. Both sides were terrified, and withdrew from the field. They say that this happened in Phrygia, in the place they call Otryae.

Lucullus was convinced that, if the two sides remained confronting one another, it would be beyond any human resources or wealth to support an army as vast as Mithridates' for any length of time. He summoned one of the prisoners, and asked him first how many men had been sharing his tent, then how much food had been in the tent when he had left. The man answered, and was told to leave. A second and a third were brought in, and Lucullus asked the same questions. Then he compared the quantities of food and the numbers of men, and calculated that the enemy's food would last only three or four days. This made him all the keener on his policy of delay, and he collected great masses of food into his camp, to make sure that he should be sitting in plenty as he beset the starving enemy.

9. Now Mithridates turned his thoughts to attacking Cyzicus. The town had suffered badly in the battle at Chalcedon, losing 3,000 men and ten ships. Mithridates wished to surprise Lucullus, so struck camp just after the evening meal, with a dark wet night to help him.⁵² At daybreak, without any Roman opposition, his forces occupied a position opposite the town at the foot of Mount Adrastea. Lucullus saw what had happened and set off in pursuit, but was happy enough not to have fallen on the enemy with his own ranks in disarray; he stationed his army at the so-called 'Thracian Village', in a position that commanded the roads by which Mithridates' supplies needed to be transported and the terrain from which they would need to be drawn.⁵³ So he had already worked out exactly what would need to be done, and he did not keep it a secret from his men. He summoned them as soon as they had pitched camp and finished their work, and grandly assured them that he would give them a bloodless victory

within a few days.⁵⁴

Mithridates now laid siege to Cyzicus from both sides. On land he had ten separate camps; to the seaboard he used his ships to block the channel that separates the city from the mainland. On the whole the Cyzicans faced the danger in good spirit, and were minded to put up with any suffering for the Romans' sake, but they did not know Lucullus's position and their lack of information about him caused them confusion and distress. And yet Lucullus's camp was perfectly visible from the town; but Mithridates' men had deceived them. They had shown them the Roman camp on the heights. 'You see those men there?' they had said; 'That's an army of Armenians and Medes, sent by Tigranes⁵⁵ to help Mithridates.' This was terrifying: the Cyzicans were, it seemed, engulfed by such a great war that, even if Lucullus arrived, they could not be confident that there was any scope left for assistance.

The first to tell them of Lucullus's presence was Demonax,⁵⁶ sent into the city by Archelaus, but they thought this was just a comforting lie and did not believe him. Then a young lad arrived, who had been caught by the enemy but escaped. They asked him to say where Lucullus was, and he laughed at them, thinking they must be joking. When he saw they were serious, he just pointed to the Roman camp. That restored their confidence. Then Lucullus took the biggest of the various ships (they were reasonably large) which sailed Lake Dascylitis. He hauled it up and transported it on wagons to the sea, then put on board as many men as it could carry. They managed to cross secretly by night, and slipped into the city.

10. It would seem that Heaven too gave heart to the people of Cyzicus, in admiration of their courage. There were several clear portents, including one at the Festival of Persephone. They had no black heifer for the sacrifice, so instead they made one of paste and placed it by the altar. The sacred heifer, the one reared specially for the goddess, normally grazed on the coast opposite, along with the other cattle of the Cyzicans; but that day she left the rest of the herd, swam across to the city and presented herself for sacrifice. The goddess also appeared in a dream to Aristagoras, the town-clerk. 'Here I am!' she said; 'I come bringing the piper of Libya against the trumpeter of Pontus. Tell the citizens to be of good cheer.' The people of Cyzicus were amazed at what she had said, but the next dawn the sea suddenly began to toss, with winds blowing in all directions. The king's siege-engines by the walls, marvellous constructions of Niconides the Thessalian, were the first to indicate what was going to happen with their creaking and groaning. Then a south wind sprang up of amazing strength, destroyed the other engines in a few minutes

and sent a hundred-foot tower crashing to the ground. There is also a story that many of the people of Troy dreamed they had seen Athena streaming with sweat and showing a glimpse of a tear in her sacred robe, saying that she had just arrived after helping the Cyzicans. The Trojans used to show a column with certain decrees and inscriptions which mentioned this.

11. At first Mithridates' own generals deceived him about the famine within his camp, and for this period he was irritated at the prolonged Cyzican resistance. Still, his taste for glory and confrontation⁵⁷ soon waned when he realized the shortages that his troops were suffering. They were even driven to cannibalism. Lucullus's generalship was certainly undramatic and unshowy, but he was (as they say) kicking them in the belly, and he concentrated wholly on depriving the enemy of his food. For this reason, Mithridates was eager to seize his opportunity when Lucullus was away besieging some outpost, and he sent away nearly all his cavalry and baggage-animals, together with those infantry who were unfit for combat. Lucullus realized what was happening, returned to camp under cover of night and early the next morning set off through a storm with ten cohorts and his cavalry. It was snowing, but the hardship did not stop Lucullus's pursuit; many of his men had to drop behind because of frostbite, but with the remainder he overtook the enemy at the River Rhyndacus. The king's forces were so completely routed that the women of Apollonia came out to steal their baggage and loot the bodies. Many were killed, as one would expect; the captured totalled 15,000 men, 6,000 horses and countless baggage-animals, and Lucullus led all these in a line past the enemy camp. (I am surprised that the historian Sallust claims that this was the Romans' first sight of camels.⁵⁸ Did he think that Scipio's⁵⁹ army of old had never seen a camel when they conquered Antiochus? Or those who had recently fought Archelaus at Orchomenus and Chaeronea?⁶⁰)

Mithridates had by now⁶¹ decided on as speedy a flight as he could, but he also wanted to keep Lucullus back with distractions and delays, so he tried to dispatch his admiral Aristonicus to the Aegean; but Aristonicus was betrayed to Lucullus and captured just as he was about to sail, together with vast quantities of gold pieces which he was taking to bribe some of the Roman troops.⁶² That drove Mithridates to take flight to the sea, while his generals withdrew the army by land. Lucullus fell on them at the River Granicus,⁶³ killed 20,000 of them and took great numbers of captives. In all, counting camp-followers as well as combatants, almost 300,000 are said to have died.

12. Lucullus's first step was to enter Cyzicus and enjoy the relaxation

and welcome he deserved. Then he travelled on to the Hellespont and began to fit out his fleet. When he put into Troy, he pitched his tent in the grounds of the Temple of Aphrodite, and in his sleep he dreamed that the goddess was standing over him and saying: 'Why slumber, mighty lion? Are the fawns not nigh?'⁶⁴ He rose, called his friends and told them of the dream before it was light; then messengers arrived from Troy, telling him that thirteen of the king's pentekonteres⁶⁵ had been seen off the 'harbour of the Achaeans', making for Lemnos. He put out to sea straight away and captured these,⁶⁶ killing their admiral Isidorus,⁶⁷ then sailed against the rest of the fleet. They were lying at anchor, and they promptly drew up their ships at the shore and mounted a very effective resistance from the decks. The position did not allow the Romans to outflank the enemy nor force them back by an assault from the open sea, for the king's ships were so firmly fixed on the shore. Still, there was one place on the island⁶⁸ where it was possible to put in, and here Lucullus landed his best troops. These fell on the enemy from the rear and killed some of them; others were forced to cut the cables of their ships and flee away to sea, crashing into one another and leaving themselves open to attack from Lucullus's fleet.⁶⁹ Many were killed, and the captives included Sertorius's general Marius:⁷⁰ he was blind in one eye, and at the time of the initial seaborne attack Lucullus had given instructions not to kill anyone who was one-eyed. He was not to die before he had suffered humiliation and outrage.⁷¹

13. Lucullus now turned to pursue Mithridates himself. He expected to find him still in Bithynia, under the watch of Voconius,⁷² whom he had sent with a fleet to Nicomedeia with orders to prevent his flight. But Voconius was too late. He had spent the time in Samothrace, being initiated into the mysteries and enjoying the festivals. Mithridates put out to sea with his fleet, anxious to reach Pontus before Lucullus could arrive. But he was overtaken by a storm, which carried off some of his ships and sunk others, so that for days afterwards the shore was full of wreckage brought in by the rough waters.⁷³ The king himself was travelling on a merchantman. Its size made it impossible for the helmsmen to steer to land in a high sea, yet it was already too waterlogged and unwieldy to face the open water. So he changed to a light brig and placed himself in the trust of its pirate crew, and thus managed to reach Heraclea Pontica, against all the odds and at great hazard to himself.

Lucullus showed a certain pretentiousness in his dealings with the senate, but he escaped any retribution for it. The senate had voted him 3,000 talents to equip a fleet, but he wrote a boastful letter of refusal: he did not need (he said) such expense or resources; he would

use the allies' ships to drive Mithridates out of the sea. And, with Heaven's help, that is exactly what happened, for they say that it was the wrath of Artemis of Priapus⁷⁴ that unleashed the storm on the men of Pontus, who had plundered her temple and destroyed her image.

14. Many were now advising Lucullus to postpone the war, but he ignored them, and launched his invasion of the king's realm by way of Bithynia and Galatia.⁷⁵ He was initially so short of essentials that 30,000 Galatians followed the army, each carrying a bushel of grain on his shoulders; but as Lucullus's march advanced and everything fell into his power, provisions became so plentiful that the price of an ox fell to one drachma and that of a slave to four, and other booty came to be so worthless that it was abandoned or destroyed, for it was impossible to sell anything to anyone in the midst of such abundance.

Their cavalry overran the land as far as Themiscyra⁷⁶ and the plains of the Thermodon, but they did no more than destroy and ravage the country. This led them to criticize Lucullus: he was bringing all the cities over, but he had not taken any by storm, nor handed any over to his troops for plunder and profit. 'And now' (they went on)⁷⁷ 'it would be no great trouble to take this rich and prosperous city of Amisus, if anyone chose to press the siege; but here we are leaving it behind, and he is leading us around the desert of the Tibareni and the Chaldaei to fight Mithridates.' Lucullus paid no attention; he had no idea that this would bring the troops to the extraordinary folly that they later showed. He preferred to reply to criticisms of his slowness, for some were attacking him for spending so much time with insignificant villages and towns and allowing Mithridates to grow more powerful. 'That', he said, 'is exactly what I want. That is the point of this delay. I want the man to become great again, and collect an army that can fight: then he might stand his ground and not flee when we approach. Do you not see that there is a great and pathless desert at his back? The Caucasus is near, with its many vast mountains and valleys, enough to hide and save ten thousand kings who are shying from battle. Then it is only a few days' journey from Cabeira to Armenia, and over Armenia sits Tigranes, King of Kings,⁷⁸ whose power is so great as to keep the Parthians out of Asia, to transport Greek cities to Media, to master Syria and Palestine and to kill the Seleucid kings and carry off their wives and daughters. And he is Mithridates' kinsman and son-in-law. He will not reject his supplication, but will protect him and make war against us; if we are too eager to drive out Mithridates, we shall risk dragging in Tigranes. He has long wanted a pretext to use against us, and none could be more reasonable than this: to be compelled to aid a kinsman and a king. Why should it be us who bring this about? Why should we teach Mithridates, if he does

not know who his allies against us should be? Why drive him into Tigranes' hands unwilling and in disgrace? Why not give him time to collect troops from his own lands, and fill them with fresh courage? Why not fight against Colchians and Tibareni and Cappadocians, whom we have beaten so often, rather than Medes and Armenians?'

15. Those were Lucullus's reasons for lingering around Amisus and not pressing the siege: then, when winter⁷⁹ had passed, he left Murena⁸⁰ in charge of the siege and began his march against Mithridates. The king was now established at Cabeira, where he was planning to stay and face the Romans. He had collected a force of 40,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, and it was the cavalry that gave him particular confidence. He crossed the River Lycus into the plain and offered battle. There was a cavalry engagement, where the Romans turned to flight; a distinguished man called Pomponius⁸¹ was injured and captured, then brought to Mithridates in a very bad state because of his wounds. The king asked if Pomponius would become his friend if he saved his life. 'Yes,' said Pomponius, 'if you make peace with the Romans; but your enemy if not.' This won Mithridates' respect, and he did him no harm.

The enemy cavalry were superior, and Lucullus was afraid of the plains; but he was nervous of the mountain route too, which was long, wooded and difficult. It now happened that some Greeks fell into his hands after taking refuge in a cave. The elder of the two, Artemidorus, promised to guide Lucullus to a spot which would be safe for the army and had a fortified position overlooking Cabeira. Lucullus trusted him, and at nightfall he lit fires⁸² and set out. He passed the narrow part of the route and occupied the place safely; and next morning he could be seen in a position above the enemy, with his army encamped in a place that allowed him an easy approach if he chose to fight, without any danger of being forced into battle if he preferred to wait.

Neither side proposed to take any risks, at least for the moment. But then – so it is said – some of the king's men were cut off by the Romans when chasing a stag, and this led to an engagement, with more and more reinforcements joining each side, until finally the king's force won. The Romans could see from the camp that their comrades were in flight, and they indignantly rushed to Lucullus, calling on him to lead them out and demanding that the word for battle should be given. But Lucullus wanted them to see how much difference the presence and sight of a wise general makes in danger and warfare, and so he ordered them to stay where they were; he himself went down to the plain, met the first of the fleeing Romans and ordered them to stand their ground and turn to fight under his command. They did what he said, and the others too faced about,

stood together and easily routed the enemy and pursued them to their camp. When Lucullus returned he imposed a traditional mark of dishonour on those who had fled, ordering them to work in unbelted tunics and dig a twelve-foot ditch while the other soldiers stood over them and watched.

16. There was in Mithridates' camp a Dandarian potentate called Olthacus.⁸³ (The Dandarians are a barbarian tribe who live near Lake Maeotis.) This man was distinguished by his strength and daring, qualities which he had often displayed in action; he was also extremely shrewd, and had a great ability to win people over through his personal charm. There was continuous jealousy and rivalry for precedence between Olthacus and another potentate of the same tribe. Olthacus now promised Mithridates a mighty exploit: he would murder Lucullus. Mithridates approved, then purposely imposed on him certain marks of dishonour to explain Olthacus's pretended resentment.⁸⁴ Olthacus rode off to Lucullus, who was delighted to receive him, for he was a well-known figure in the Roman camp; and after a brief trial period Lucullus welcomed his shrewdness and his enthusiasm, and finally admitted him to share his table and join his group of advisers.

When the Dandarian judged that his opportunity had come, he ordered his slaves to take his horse outside the encampment. It was midday, and the soldiers were resting and sleeping. Olthacus made his way to the general's tent, confident that no one would try and stop a man who was on such close terms with Lucullus, and who claimed he had something important to say to him. And he would indeed have passed into the tent itself, but sleep, which has destroyed so many generals, now rescued Lucullus. For he was in bed, and Menedemus, one of his chamberlains, was standing by the door. Menedemus told Olthacus that he had come at a bad time, for Lucullus had just begun his rest, after a long period of sleeplessness and great hardship. Olthacus did not leave when Menedemus told him to, but said he would go in anyway, as he wanted to discuss a matter of great urgency and importance. Menedemus lost his temper, and said, 'Nothing is more urgent than to keep Lucullus safe,' and he pushed the man away with both hands. Olthacus left the encampment in fear, took his horse and drove off to Mithridates' camp without achieving his mission. Such is the influence, for good or ill, which timing exercises on affairs, just as it does in the treatment of disease.

17. After this Sornatius⁸⁵ was sent with ten cohorts to get some supplies of grain. Menander,⁸⁶ one of Mithridates' generals, gave pursuit, but Sornatius stood and fought, inflicting great losses on the enemy and putting them to flight. Then Adrianus⁸⁷ was sent in force

on a similar mission, with the aim of giving the soldiers grain in abundance. Mithridates tried to prevent it, sending Menemachus and Myron⁸⁸ in command of a large force of cavalry and infantry; but all except two of this force were cut down by the Romans, or so they say. Mithridates tried to conceal and minimize the disaster, pretending that his generals' inexperience had caught them out, but Adrianus marched past his camp in splendour, at the head of many wagons weighed down with grain and spoils. Mithridates himself was dispirited enough at the sight and his men fell into unmanageable confusion and panic, and so the decision was taken to withdraw. But then the king's own forces tried to send off their own possessions first, and to prevent the others from doing the same; furious, the others pushed their way violently to the gates, and began to seize the baggage and slaughter its owners. That was when Dorylaeus the general, wearing no armour but just his purple cloak, was killed for the sake of that very cloak,⁸⁹ and Hermaeus⁹⁰ the priest was trampled down by the gates. Mithridates himself, deserted by all his attendants and grooms, joined the flight from the camp and mingled with all the rest.⁹¹ At first he could not even find any of the royal horses to use, and it was only late in the day when his eunuch Ptolemy caught a glimpse of him as he was carried along in the torrent of the flight. Ptolemy was himself on horseback, and he jumped down and handed his horse to the king. For by now the pursuing Romans were upon them, and it was not lack of speed that stopped them capturing him, for they were on the very point of achieving this; it was the soldiers' petty greed that robbed the Romans of the king, this prey that they had hunted for so long amid so many hardships and dangers, and robbed the conquering Lucullus of his prize. For the pursuers had very nearly overtaken the horse which was bearing Mithridates away; then, between themselves and the king, they saw one of the mules carrying the gold. Perhaps it had found its way there by accident, perhaps the king had deliberately let it loose into the path of his pursuers. Anyway, they plundered it and collected the gold and bickered among themselves, and thus let Mithridates escape.⁹² Nor was this the only bad service that their greed did Lucullus. He had also given instructions that Callistratus, the minister in charge of the king's private papers, should be brought before him, but those who were bringing him saw that he had five hundred gold pieces in his belt, and killed him. Lucullus nevertheless allowed these men to ravage the enemy camp.

18. When he took Cabeira and most of the other forts, he found some great treasures – and some great prisons too. There were many Greeks in captivity there, and also many kinsmen of the king, people who had long given themselves up for dead, and now regarded

Lucullus as granting them not so much safety but a sort of revival and rebirth. Mithridates' sister Nyssa was also captured by Lucullus. Her capture was her salvation: the other wives and sisters, who had been residing peacefully at Pharnacea and seemed to be as remote as possible from the danger, were ruthlessly murdered by the eunuch Bacchides, sent against them by the fleeing king. These included, among many others, two of the king's sisters, Roxane and Stateira, who were aged about forty but still unmarried, and two wives who were Ionian by birth, Berenice from Chios and Monime from Miletus.

It was Monime⁹³ who was most famous among the Greeks. When the king was tempting her virtue and sent 15,000 gold pieces, she still refused him, until a marriage-contract was agreed and Mithridates sent her a diadem⁹⁴ and proclaimed her queen. But she had a miserable life, bewailing her beauty and saying she had gained herself a master, not a husband, and barbarian warders, not a marriage and a home; now she was far from Greece; the blessings she had hoped for came her way only in dreams; the genuine blessings of home she had lost.

Now Bacchides arrived and told them that they must all die, though they could each choose the method they found easiest and most painless. Monime took the diadem from her head, wound it round her neck and hanged herself by it; but it quickly snapped, and she exclaimed, 'You damned piece of cloth, aren't you useful even for this?' She spat on it and threw it away, and called on Bacchides to cut her throat. As for Berenice, she took a cup of poison. Her mother was by her side, and at her request she shared the cup, and both drank together. The poison was powerful enough to account for the weaker of the two bodies, but Berenice had not drunk enough and it did not kill her; as her death-agonies grew prolonged and Bacchides was impatient, they strangled her. There is also a story told of those two unmarried sisters. Roxane drank the poison and accompanied it with a torrent of curses and abuse, but Stateira did not utter anything ignoble nor of evil import, and praised her brother for not neglecting them when his own safety was at risk, but making sure that they died free and unravished. The report of this pained Lucullus, naturally good and generous a man as he was.

19. Lucullus drove on to Talaura, but he was too late. Mithridates had passed through four days earlier on his flight to Tigranes, and Lucullus turned back. He conquered the Chaldaeans and the Tibareni, took Lesser Armenia, and brought over forts and cities, then sent Appius⁹⁵ to Tigranes with a demand for Mithridates' surrender. He himself returned to the siege of Amisus, which was still dragging on, largely because of Callimachus the enemy general. He was a master of

engineering technique and all the tricks of siegecraft, and he caused the Romans immense trouble – though he later paid for it.⁹⁶ But now he met his match in Lucullus, who waited for the time of day when the men were usually withdrawn from the walls and sent off to rest, launched a sudden attack and took a small part of the wall. Callimachus promptly slipped away from the city and set fire to it. Perhaps he begrudged the Romans any benefit from its possession; perhaps he was simply covering his own escape, for as the surge of flames engulfed the walls no one paid any attention to the people who were sailing away. The soldiers were busy getting themselves ready to plunder, while Lucullus himself, in pity for the dying city, was rushing in to try to help and calling on his men to quench the flames. No one paid any attention. They were demanding their spoils and shouting and clashing their arms together, until finally he had to give in to them, thinking that at least this would save the city from the fire. But the result was the exact opposite: the soldiers were poking around everything with torches and carrying fire everywhere, and it was they who destroyed most of the houses.⁹⁷ Next morning Lucullus entered the city, and said tearfully to his friends that he had often before thought Sulla fortunate, but today in particular he understood the marvellous quality of the man's luck, for he had wanted to save Athens, and managed to do it.⁹⁸ 'And I wanted Sulla as my model,' he said, 'but now Destiny has made sure that I will be remembered as a Mummius.'⁹⁹

He nonetheless tried to do what he could for the city. The fire was put out by some showers of rain, which by a stroke of divine luck had coincided with the city's fall. Lucullus himself rebuilt most of the destroyed buildings before he left, and he welcomed back the people of Amisus who had fled, and also settled there any other Greeks who wished, adding to the foundation a region 15 miles in circumference. Amisus was in fact a colony of Athens, founded when she was at the peak of her power and controlled the sea,¹⁰⁰ and for this reason many Athenians who wished to escape Aristion's¹⁰¹ tyranny had sailed out to live in Amisus and share its citizenship. Their fate was to escape from their own misfortunes and share those of others. Still, Lucullus gave good clothes to the survivors, together with 200 drachmas apiece, and sent them back home.

This was also the time when Tyrannion the scholar¹⁰² was captured. Murena¹⁰³ asked for him as a prize, took him and granted him his freedom – though there was not much freedom or liberality in the way Murena used his gift. Lucullus thought it wrong that a man respected for his scholarship should first be enslaved, then freed; for the grant of a nominal freedom in fact amounted to the theft of the freedom he had always enjoyed. This was not the only occasion where Murena

emerged as sadly deficient in the gentlemanly qualities of a Lucullus.

20. Lucullus now turned his attention to the cities of Asia Minor, and the respite from warfare allowed him to concentrate on the efficient administration of justice and law, something the province had lacked for too long. It had indeed suffered unspeakable and incredible misfortunes, devastated and enslaved at the hands of the tax-collectors and moneylenders.¹⁰⁴ Individuals had had to sell their handsome sons and virgin daughters, and states their votive treasures, paintings and sacred statues. Finally the men themselves had become forfeit and were enslaved, but not before they had suffered even worse, with tortures involving ropes and latticed racks and horses, or standing in the open in searing heat, or being forced in freezing winter into mud or ice. After all that, slavery seemed a sort of unburdening and peace.

That was the sort of evil Lucullus found in the cities, and in a short time he gave the sufferers complete release. First he imposed a limit on interest-rates of 1 per cent a month; second, he allowed remission of all interest on old debts which exceeded the principal; third, and most important, he allowed the creditor a maximum of 25 per cent of the debtor's income. Compound interest was outlawed, at pain of losing all the principal.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, all debts were paid off within four years, and owners regained their possessions in freedom. This common indebtedness originated with the 20,000 talents that Sulla had fined Asia.¹⁰⁶ Twice that amount had been repaid to the moneylenders, but they had renewed the debt, and since then they had brought it up to 120,000 talents with the accruing interest.

The moneylenders felt very badly done by, and launched attacks on Lucullus in Rome, bribing some of the demagogues¹⁰⁷ to act against him; these moneylenders were very influential and included many politicians among their debtors. Yet not merely did Lucullus himself win acclaim from the peoples who had benefited,¹⁰⁸ the other provinces too yearned for his presence, and envied those who had the blessing of a governor like this.

21. It is time to return to Appius Claudius, the envoy sent to Tigranes; he was in fact Lucullus's brother-in-law¹⁰⁹ at the time. First he was taken by the king's guides around an unnecessarily time-consuming and roundabout inland road, but then a Syrian freedman informed him of the correct route and he abandoned that extended and contrived one, bidding the barbarian guides a long farewell. A few more days took him across the Euphrates to Antioch by Daphne, where he was told to stay and wait for Tigranes, who was still away subduing some cities in Phoenicia. Appius won the support of many local princes who were disaffected with their Armenian overlord, including Zarbienus, king of Gordyene; many of the enslaved cities

sent clandestine messages too, and he gave them promises of Lucullus's help, but told them to bide their time for the moment. For the rule of the Armenians was harsh and intolerable to Greeks, and the attitude of the king himself had become theatrical and overbearing after so many successes; he was not merely surrounded by all the blessings which excite most people's envy and admiration – he even gave the impression that they existed for his sake alone. When he had begun, his hopes had been derisory, but he had conquered many nations, he had inflicted unprecedented humiliation on the Parthians, and he had filled Mesopotamia with Greeks, dragging many from Cappadocia and Cilicia and settling them there.¹¹⁰ He also transplanted the nomad Arabs and settled them nearby, so that he could use their skills in trading. Many kings paid court to him, and he kept four by his side like attendants or bodyguards. When he was riding, they would run on foot in their tunics beside his horse; when he was seated and conducting business, they would stand by with their arms crossed. That posture was seen as the most expressive of servitude, suggesting that they had sold their freedom and were offering their bodies to the master for his use rather than his service.

Appius was not at all apprehensive or disturbed by all this theatricality, but as soon as he was granted audience he bluntly stated that he had come to take Mithridates, who was owed to Lucullus for his triumph – or, if he did not get him, to declare war on Tigranes. Those who were there could immediately see that Tigranes was discomfited by such frankness, for all the relaxed smile which he affected as he listened. This was the first person in twenty-five years he had heard speak freely:¹¹¹ that was the length of his reign, or rather his oppression. He replied to Appius that he would not give up Mithridates, and if the Romans attacked he would defend himself. He was also irritated with Lucullus for addressing him only as 'king', not 'King of Kings',¹¹² in his letter, so in his reply he did not address him as 'general' either. But he sent splendid gifts to Appius, and when Appius refused them he offered more. At this Appius, who did not wish to give the impression of rejecting his gifts in enmity, took a single bowl and sent the rest back,¹¹³ and swiftly departed to join his general.

22. So far, Tigranes had not even deigned to see or speak to Mithridates, even though he was his kinsman and had lost so great a realm. Instead, he had treated him with haughty arrogance, keeping him in a sort of captivity in marshy, sickly locations. Now, however, he sent a warm and honorific dispatch inviting him to the palace, and the two had secret discussions; in these they dealt with their own mutual suspicions, but only to the damage of their friends, on to

whom they deflected all the blame. These friends included Metrodorus of Scepsis,¹¹⁴ an elegant speaker and a scholar, who at one point had been so close to Mithridates that he had been called ‘father of the king’. It seems that Mithridates had sent him as an envoy to Tigranes with a request for help against the Romans, and Tigranes had asked him, ‘What is your own advice, Metrodorus?’ He had replied that as an envoy he urged him to agree, but as an adviser he counselled refusal: perhaps that was because he saw what was in Tigranes’ interest, perhaps he genuinely did not wish Mithridates to be saved. Tigranes now revealed this to Mithridates and denounced the man, assuming that the king would not do him any irretrievable harm. But Metrodorus was immediately executed, much to Tigranes’ remorse – even though he was not the entire cause of the man’s downfall, for Mithridates hated him already, and this was the last straw. There had been suspicions for a long time, as emerged when the king’s secret papers were captured, which included an order for Metrodorus’s death. Anyway, Tigranes gave the body a fine burial. He had betrayed him when alive; he spared no expense on the corpse.

For Athens’ sake, I should add a mention of Amphicrates the orator,¹¹⁵ who also met his death at Tigranes’ court. The story goes that he went in exile to Seleucia on the Tigris, but when they asked him to stay there as a professional sophist he grandly refused, saying that ‘A saucepan is not big enough for a dolphin, and this city is not big enough for me’. Then they say he moved on to the court of Cleopatra, Mithridates’ daughter and Tigranes’ wife,¹¹⁶ where he was swiftly denounced; barred from meeting any Greeks, he starved himself to death. He too was buried with honour, by Cleopatra, and his tomb is at a town in the region called Sapha.

23. Lucullus had now filled Asia with an abundance of peace and good government. Nor did he neglect matters of pleasure, and the delight and goodwill they can bring. Based in Ephesus, he courted the cities with processions and celebratory festivals and competitions for athletes and gladiators. They responded by instituting ‘Luculleia’, festivals in the man’s honour; and the honour itself gave him less pleasure than the unforced affection that lay behind it.

Now Appius arrived,¹¹⁷ and war with Tigranes seemed inevitable. Lucullus returned to Pontus and resumed command of the troops; then he laid Sinope under siege, or rather the Cilicians who had occupied the city for the king. These men killed many of the townspeople and set fire to the city itself, then fled under cover of darkness. Lucullus saw what had happened and entered the city; he put to death eight thousand of the Cilicians who had been left behind, restored to the others what they owned and did what he could to aid the town. That

was particularly because of a dream that he had of someone standing at his side and saying, 'Come forward a little, Lucullus: Autolycus¹¹⁸ is here, and wishes to meet you.' When he awoke he could not make out what the dream implied, but that was the day when he took the city. As he was pursuing the Cilicians who were sailing away, he saw a statue lying on the shore: the Cilicians had plundered it, but had not had time to put it on board. It was a fine work of Sthenis,¹¹⁹ and someone told him that it depicted the Autolycus who was Sinope's founder. This Autolycus was traditionally the son of Deimachus, and was one of the Thessalians who accompanied Heracles against the Amazons.¹²⁰ As he sailed from his home with Demoleon and Phlogius, Autolycus's ship had been wrecked on the Chersonese at the place called Pedalion, but he survived along with his arms and companions and made his way to Sinope. He took the city from the Syrians who were occupying it, descendants (they say) of Syrus, son of Apollo, and Sinope, daughter of Asopis. When Lucullus heard all this he was reminded of the advice of Sulla, who in his *Memoirs*¹²¹ counselled him to regard dreams as the firmest and most reliable indications of all.

Lucullus heard that Mithridates and Tigranes were on the point of moving their forces into Lycaonia and Cilicia, with the plan of invading Asia before he could reach the region himself. He found the Armenian king's policy astonishing. If he had planned to attack the Romans, why had he not made use of Mithridates when he was at the height of his powers, and linked the two forces when Mithridates was strong? Why had he let him be destroyed and crushed only to start the war now, when hope was faint and cold? It was just as if he was throwing himself to the ground to join men too weak to stand.

24. Mithridates' son Machares¹²² was in control of the Bosphorus, and he now sent Lucullus a crown worth a thousand gold pieces, and a request that he be recognized as a friend and ally of the Roman people. That gave Lucullus the impression that the earlier war was now ended. Leaving Sornatius¹²³ to protect the Pontic area with 6,000 men, he set off himself to engage in this second war¹²⁴ with 12,000 infantry and fewer than 3,000 cavalry. Here he seemed to be taking a reckless risk, with none of the rational calculation necessary for success. He was going to attack warlike peoples, with many tens of thousands of cavalry; the country that opened before him was vast, hemmed by deep rivers and snow-peaked mountains. His men were never easy to control, and now they were most reluctant and quarrelsome campaigners. Back in Rome there were demagogues howling their outrage at Lucullus, claiming that he was grabbing at one war after another and sacrificing the city's interests for his own: his aim, they said, was never to lay down his arms or give up his

command, but it was the state itself which was being put at risk. And, in time, these people were to achieve what they wanted.¹²⁵

Lucullus marched swiftly to the Euphrates, which he found in full and muddy flow, swollen by the winter rains. He was irritated by the prospect of the delay and trouble necessary to collect ferry-boats and build rafts. Then, at evening, the flood began to subside, and during the night it grew weaker still. At dawn the banks and channel of the river were visible. Little islands began to show and the river split into pools around them, and the local people fell down before Lucullus in worship, for this was almost unprecedented:¹²⁶ it was as if the river itself was surrendering meekly to him, and allowing an easy and swift crossing. Lucullus seized the moment and began to move the army across, and an auspicious omen accompanied the crossing. This is a place where there are holy cattle pasturing, sacred to Artemis Persia, whom the barbarian tribes beyond the Euphrates revere more than any other god. These cattle are used only for sacrifice, and otherwise they range freely around the countryside. They are branded with the sign of the torch of the goddess, and it is not at all easy or straightforward to take one of their number when they are needed. One of these now, after the army had crossed the Euphrates, came and stood on a certain rock which was thought sacred to Artemis; then she lowered her head just as if she was being pulled down by a rope, offering herself willingly to Lucullus for sacrifice.¹²⁷ He sacrificed a bull too as a thanksgiving to the Euphrates for the crossing.

He immediately pitched camp for the rest of the day, but on the next and the following days he marched on through Sophone. He left the local peoples unharmed, for they came to him and received the army willingly. There were some soldiers eager to take a fort which they thought to be stacked with money. 'No,' said Lucullus, 'that is the fort we need to destroy,' and he pointed to the Taurus mountains in the distance; 'these forts here are waiting as prizes for the victors'. He went on by forced marches, crossed the Tigris, and invaded Armenia.

25. The first man to bring Tigranes news of Lucullus's approach was rewarded by having his head cut off. Thus no one else told him anything, and Tigranes just sat there in ignorance, not realizing that the enemy's fire was already beginning to blaze around him. Instead, he heard sycophantic comments along the lines that Lucullus would be a great general if he even stood his ground against Tigranes at Ephesus, rather than fleeing from Asia at the sight of so many tens of thousands of enemies. It all confirms how an ordinary mentality cannot stay rational amid great success,¹²⁸ just as many human bodies cannot stand great quantities of unwatered wine.

Mithrobarzanes was the first of his friends to dare to tell him the

truth; and he too reaped an unfortunate reward for his frankness, for he was immediately sent against Lucullus with 3,000 cavalry and a large force of infantry.¹²⁹ His orders were to take the commander alive and to crush the rest of the army. Part of Lucullus's army was already pitching camp and the rest was coming up when the scouts brought news that the enemy was approaching. This alarmed Lucullus, for there was a danger that Mithrobarzanes might launch a disruptive assault while the Roman forces were still split and disorganized. Lucullus himself took command of the encampment, and sent his legate Sextilius¹³⁰ with 1,600 cavalry and a slightly larger number of heavy and light infantry; his orders were to get close to the enemy and wait until it was confirmed that the main force was safely encamped. And that is what Sextilius tried to do. But Mithrobarzanes attacked rashly, Sextilius was forced to engage, and a battle ensued: Mithrobarzanes himself fell fighting, and nearly all the rest of his army took to flight and were destroyed.

This led Tigranes to abandon Tigranocerta, the great city which he himself had founded, and retreat to the Taurus mountains. There he collected all his forces. Lucullus allowed him no time for preparations, but sent Murena to harry and cut off the troops gathering in Tigranes' support, and Sextilius to prevent a large force of Arabs from linking with the king. Sextilius fell on the Arabs as they were pitching camp and killed most of them, while Murena followed Tigranes, seized his moment and attacked the army as it was threading through a rough and narrow defile in a long column. Tigranes himself fled, abandoning all his baggage-train; many of the Armenians were killed, and even more taken prisoner.

26. After this success Lucullus struck camp and moved on Tigranocerta, then invested and besieged the city. Inside were many Greeks who had been driven out of Cilicia, together with many barbarians who had suffered a similar fate – Adiabeni, Assyrians, Gordyeni and Cappadocians, all people who had been transported and compelled to settle here after Tigranes had destroyed their lands.¹³¹ The city was also brimming with treasure and dedicatory offerings, for potentates and even ordinary citizens had all vied with the king in helping him build and adorn a great city. That is why Lucullus invested it so vigorously, for he thought Tigranes would not be able to resist the temptation of coming down to fight it out; anger would overcome his better judgement. And Lucullus was right. Mithridates spent much effort in trying to dissuade Tigranes, sending messengers and letters urging him not to join battle but to use his cavalry to cut off the Roman supplies; and Taxiles,¹³² who had come from Mithridates to join the campaign, added his own entreaties as well,

begging the king to be cautious of Roman arms and avoid them as something invincible. At first Tigranes was receptive to this advice. But then the Armenians and Gordyeni arrived in full force; so did the Medes and Adiabeni, led by their kings; there were also many Arabs from the coast of Babylonia, many Albani and their neighbours the Iberes from the Caspian Sea, and a good number of the peoples who live by the Araxes: these last were not led by kings, but had been persuaded by Tigranes' gifts and the goodwill he had shown them. Now the king's drinking parties were full of hope and confidence and barbarian braggadocio, and so were his councils. Taxiles was even in danger of being killed for his opposition to the idea of battle, while Mithridates seemed to be trying through sheer jealousy to stop Tigranes winning a mighty success. That was why Tigranes did not even wait for Mithridates, for he wanted to stop him sharing in the glory. Instead, Tigranes advanced with all his army, and he told his friends (so it is said) how vexed he felt that the battle would only be with Lucullus; how much better it would be to fight all the Roman generals at once!¹³³

Indeed, this confidence was not altogether crazy or irrational, as he looked on all those races and kings among his followers, all those phalanxes of heavy infantry and those tens of thousands of cavalry. He had 20,000 archers and slingers under his command; there were 55,000 horsemen including 17,000 cataphracts.¹³⁴ (Lucullus gave that number in his report to the senate.) Tigranes' heavy infantry, organized partly in phalanxes and partly in smaller detachments, numbered 150,000;¹³⁵ then there were 35,000 workmen to lay roads, build bridges, clear rivers, cut wood and do anything else that was necessary, and these were drawn up behind the fighting men, making the sight of them more impressive and their strength more formidable.

27. Tigranes crossed the Taurus range, and the two armies came into sight of one another. Tigranes was there in full force; the Romans were by Tigranocerta, and the mass of barbarians within the city reacted to the sight of Tigranes' army with loud cries and violent din, standing on the walls and pointing threateningly at the Armenians.¹³⁶ In Lucullus's council-of-war some urged him to abandon the siege and move on Tigranes, while others warned of the dangers of raising the siege and leaving so many enemies in his rear. His answer was that each view individually was wrong but both together were right, and so he split the army in two. He left Murena with 6,000 infantry to continue the siege, while he himself advanced at the head of twenty-four cohorts, comprising no more than 10,000 legionaries, and all the cavalry and about 1,000 slingers and archers.¹³⁷ He pitched camp by the river in the middle of a great plain. The force looked derisory to

Tigranes, and the flatterers had a field-day. Some just mocked, others jokingly cast lots for the spoils, and each of the commanders and kings came begging to be allowed to carry through the fight on his own: Tigranes could just sit and watch. Tigranes wanted to join in the merriment himself, and it was now that he made that famous comment, 'Too many to be envoys, too few to be an army.' That was the sarcastic and facetious way they carried on.

At dawn Lucullus led his troops out in arms. To the east of the river lay the barbarian army, but the river itself wound round to the west, and it was there that it was easiest to ford. Lucullus led his force rapidly in that direction, and Tigranes thought he was retreating; he called Taxiles and asked with a laugh, 'Can't you see those "invincible Roman legions"¹³⁸ running away?' 'I should like to think, your Majesty, that your guardian spirit was bringing about something marvellous,' said Taxiles. 'But men aren't so smartly turned out just to go on a march, and they don't carry polished shields or wear uncovered helmets in the way that these men have taken their leather coverings off their arms. That is the turn-out of men who are going to war and marching on the enemy.' Before he had finished speaking they could see the first of Lucullus's eagles as he wheeled around, and his cohorts forming into maniples to cross the river. It was as if Tigranes was just managing to pull himself together after a drinking bout. 'Are the men marching on us?' he cried two or three times. His main force, in great disorder, moved into its positions; the king himself took command of the centre, and he consigned the left wing to the king of the Adiabeni and the right to the king of the Medes, who also had most of the cataphracts.

As Lucullus was about to cross the river, some of his captains urged him to be cautious of the day: for it was one of those forbidden, so-called 'black days', the anniversary of the day when Caepio's army was destroyed in battle against the Cimbri.¹³⁹ He gave that famous reply, 'I will make this day too a lucky one for Rome.' It was October 6th.¹⁴⁰

28. He added some more words of encouragement, then began to cross the river. He led the column himself, with his gleaming breastplate of iron mail and his tasselled cloak. He also made sure that his men saw his sword already drawn from its scabbard, an indication that they needed to engage these men as soon as they could in hand-to-hand combat; the enemy strength was in their missiles, and the Romans needed to cut down the amount of vulnerable open ground by the speed of their attack. Then he saw the cataphracts, the most renowned and formidable part of the enemy armament, drawn up below a hill whose top flattened out to a broad plateau; the approach to the hill

was not more than half a mile in length, and it was not specially difficult or steep. He ordered the Thracian cavalry and his Galatian force to attack from the flank, and parry the enemy pikes with their short swords. (These pikes are the only real strength of the cataphracts, for otherwise the weight and rigidity of the armour prevents them moving or striking at the enemy. The men are virtually immured inside their armour.) Lucullus himself took two cohorts and forced his way to the hill; his men followed vigorously, impressed by seeing their commander leading the way in his armour, sharing the rigours of an ordinary foot-soldier and pressing his way through. When he reached the top, he stood where all could see him and gave a great shout: 'We have won, my comrades, we have won.' And with those words he led the attack on the cataphracts,¹⁴¹ with orders that his men should no longer use their javelins; each was to grapple at close quarters and strike at the legs and thighs, the only place where a cataphract is unprotected. Not that it turned out to be necessary, for the cataphracts' resistance collapsed as soon as the Romans attacked. The Roman battle-cry was enough, and in the most shameful rout they crashed themselves and their heavy horses into their own infantry before those infantry could even begin to fight. Without even a wound, without the sight of blood, all those tens of thousands were beaten. The carnage followed when they fled, or rather when they tried to flee; for they could not get away, so thick and deep were the ranks around them.

Tigranes rode away early in the battle, with just a few companions. His son¹⁴² shared his fate, and when the king saw him he snatched the diadem from his own head and gave it to him in tears, telling him to save himself as best he could by another route. The young man did not dare to put on the diadem, but gave it to his most trusted slave to keep for him. It so happened that this slave was taken captive and brought to Lucullus, and so Tigranes' diadem was captured along with the rest of the prisoners.¹⁴³

It is said that over 100,000 infantry were killed,¹⁴⁴ and very few of the cavalry escaped. One hundred Romans were wounded, five died. This was the battle which the philosopher Antiochus¹⁴⁵ mentioned in his *On the Gods*, saying that the sun had never seen another like it. Another philosopher, Strabo,¹⁴⁶ says in his *Historical Resume* that the Romans themselves were ashamed, and made jokes at their own expense for needing arms against slavish people like these. Livy¹⁴⁷ comments that no Roman army was ever more outnumbered, for the victors were barely 5 per cent of the defeated, perhaps even less. The most skilled and experienced Roman generals singled out Lucullus for special praise, for he had defeated the two most glorious and greatest of kings by the two most opposite techniques, speed and delay: for

when Mithridates was at his most powerful Lucullus had destroyed him by slow attrition,¹⁴⁸ and now he had crushed Tigranes by his rapidity. There had been few generals before him who had so used delay as a mode of action, or daring in the cause of caution.

29. That was the reason why Mithridates made no special efforts to hurry to the battle, for he thought that Lucullus would fight with his usual caution and procrastination, and so he was taking his time on the march to Tigranes. He first realized what had happened when he met a few Armenians on the road, who were in a most agitated and nervous state as they fled; then more came up, unarmed and wounded, telling of the defeat. He now went in search of Tigranes, and found him deserted and humbled. But Mithridates did not repay him in kind for the arrogant treatment he had received;¹⁴⁹ instead, he dismounted and joined the king in weeping for the sufferings they shared. Mithridates was attended by a kingly train and retinue, but he handed these over to Tigranes, and spoke encouragingly of the future. So these two turned to the collection of fresh forces.

Within Tigranocerta itself there was a struggle between Greeks and barbarians, with the Greeks eager to surrender.¹⁵⁰ Lucullus attacked and took it, ransacked the treasure-stores and gave the city itself over to his soldiers to plunder. There were 8,000 talents of coined money there, apart from other valuables, and besides this he distributed 800 drachmas to each man from the spoils.¹⁵¹ Then he discovered that he had captured in the city a large number of 'the artists of Dionysus',¹⁵² whom Tigranes had collected from everywhere for the dedication of the theatre he had built; Lucullus used them instead for the celebratory games and spectacles. He sent the Greeks home to their own countries with money to cover the journey, and he did the same with the barbarians who had been compelled to settle there. So one city was broken up, but many were resettled as their old inhabitants returned, and they duly fêted Lucullus as their benefactor and their founder.

Everything else too ran as Lucullus would have wished, for he cared more to be praised for his justice and generosity than for his military exploits. For his army shared a little, and fortune a good deal, in these exploits; but it was those other qualities that allowed him to display the civilization and culture of his soul, and it was these that now won the barbarians over in a bloodless campaign. For the Arab kings arrived,¹⁵³ surrendering their lands, and the race of Sophene came over too. The Gordyeni were so affected by Lucullus that they wanted to abandon their cities and follow him, along with their wives and children.¹⁵⁴ This happened for the following reason. I have mentioned¹⁵⁵ that Zarbienus, king of the Gordyeni, had had secret

dealings with Lucullus through Appius, when there was talk of an alliance against the oppressive Tigranes. Zarbienus had been betrayed and executed along with his children and wife, before the Roman invasion of Armenia. Lucullus did not forget it, but travelled into the land of the Gordyeni and gave Zarbienus a solemn funeral: he built a pyre, decorated it with royal clothing and gold and spoils from Tigranes, and lit the flame for it with his own hand. He also poured libations along with the man's relatives and friends, hailing him as his own comrade and an ally of Rome. Then he gave orders for a costly memorial to be built, for vast quantities of gold and silver were found in Zarbienus's palace. There were also three million bushels of grain, so that the soldiers benefited too; and Lucullus was acclaimed as the man who had not spent a penny from the public purse, but used the war to fund itself.

30. Now an embassy arrived from the Parthian king,¹⁵⁶ offering friendship and an alliance. That suited Lucullus well enough, and he sent ambassadors of his own to the Parthian, but these caught the king out in playing a double game: he had even made a secret offer to join Tigranes in return for possession of Mesopotamia.¹⁵⁷ This discovery led Lucullus to leave Tigranes and Mithridates behind like exhausted opponents, and to turn to the Parthians instead and march against them: what a marvellous achievement it would be to overthrow three kings in a row, in a single thrust of war, just like an athlete taking on one opponent after another!¹⁵⁸ And to drive unconquered and triumphant through the three greatest empires under the sun! So he sent to Sornatius¹⁵⁹ and his fellow-commanders in Pontus, ordering them to bring the army he had left there. The plan was to attack through Gordyene. But those commanders were already having trouble with their soldiers, who were in a difficult and mutinous frame of mind,¹⁶⁰ and now the troops' indiscipline became plain, for the commanders found it quite impossible to bring them over. Persuasion and compulsion were equally ineffective. The men cried out swearing that they would not even stay where they were, but they would go off and leave Pontus unprotected. When this news reached Lucullus, it infected his own troops with the same malady. Their wealth and excesses had already made them sluggish campaigners, eager for peace and leisure. When they heard of the violent words of their comrades in Pontus, they declared that these were real men indeed, and a model to themselves: for had they not already done enough to earn their safety and their rest?

31. That, and even worse than that, was the tone of their complaints, and Lucullus had to abandon the notion of attacking Parthia. But he did mount another campaign against Tigranes in the height of

summer.¹⁶¹ After crossing the Taurus he was dismayed to find everything still green and springlike in the plains. (The seasons are later there because of the cold climate.) Still, he descended from the mountains, and routed the Armenians on the two or three occasions they dared to oppose him; that removed any fear of resistance, and he went on to ravage the villages and to destroy the grain which had been stored for Tigranes, so that he turned on the enemy the shortages he had feared for himself. Next, he challenged them to battle, digging ditches around their palisade and ravaging the land before their eyes, but he could not entice them out after so many defeats. So he broke camp and marched on Tigranes' capital Artaxata, where the king had left his young children and his wives; Lucullus thought that he would surely not let them go without a fight.

The story goes that Hannibal the Carthaginian came to Artaxias,¹⁶² king of Armenia, after Antiochus's defeat by the Romans.¹⁶³ Hannibal had many useful things to suggest and advise, and one led to Artaxata's foundation. When he discovered that the finest and most delightful location of the country lay idle and neglected, he sketched out a plan of a city there, brought Artaxias to the spot, showed it to him and urged him to build.¹⁶⁴ The king was delighted and begged him to supervise the work himself, and thus a great and beautiful city was born. It came to bear the king's name, and it was declared Armenia's capital.

That was the city on which Lucullus now marched. Tigranes held back no longer. He gathered all his forces, and three days later he encamped close to the Romans. Between the two armies flowed the Arsianias river, which the Romans would have to cross if they marched on Artaxata. Victory seemed within Lucullus's grasp, and he sacrificed to the gods, then began to move his army across the river. Twelve cohorts led the way, and the others were drawn up around, ready to resist any enemy encircling movements: for Tigranes had many cavalry and elite troops arrayed against them, and in the van were Mardian mounted archers and Iberian spearbearers, the troops whom Tigranes thought the most formidable and reliable of his mercenaries. Not that they achieved anything very remarkable. They skirmished a little with the Roman cavalry, then fled before the advancing infantry, splitting in two directions and drawing the cavalry after them in pursuit. As these scattered, Tigranes rode forward with his main cavalry force, formidable in numbers and appearance, and Lucullus was disconcerted enough to call back his own cavalry from their pursuit. He led the way himself; the Atropateni were stationed opposite him with the noblest of the king's retinue, and he stood his ground against them – indeed, he so terrified them that they turned to flight before even engaging. Altogether there were three kings¹⁶⁵ in

the field, among these the most shameless flight was that of Mithridates of Pontus. The Roman war-cry was enough for him, and he fled immediately.¹⁶⁶ The pursuit was a long one, lasting all night, until eventually the Roman forces were exhausted, not merely with killing, but also with capturing prisoners and taking all sorts of plunder. Livy comments that the first battle saw the greater number of dead and captured, but in this one the victims were those of nobler rank.¹⁶⁷

32. This success filled Lucullus with elation and confidence, and he determined to march into the interior and conquer the entire barbarian realm; but around the autumn equinox¹⁶⁸ he unexpectedly encountered severe weather, with all-enveloping snowstorms alternating with heavy frosts. These made the rivers so cold that they were difficult for the horses to drink from; they were hard to cross too, for the ice broke into jagged fragments which cut the horses' sinews. Most of the country is wooded and marshy, with narrow defiles; this made the march extraordinarily wet, as they struggled on through the falling snow and spent miserable nights in moist encampments.

It was not many days after the battle before the men stopped following obediently, and began to object. At first it was a matter of petitions, as they sent the military tribunes to plead with Lucullus. Then it became more violent, and they gathered in groups and kept shouting out loud in their tents in the night, a sure sign (it seems) of an army heading for mutiny. Yet Lucullus responded with plea after plea, calling on them to fill their hearts with endurance, until they could destroy this Armenian Carthage, this foundation of Rome's greatest enemy, Hannibal himself.

The men were unimpressed, and Lucullus began the retreat. He crossed the Taurus by different passes, then came down into a region called Mygdonice, a rich, warm area with a great and populous city which the barbarians called Nisibis and the Greeks Antiocheia Mygdonice. Nominal control of the city lay in the hands of Tigranes' brother Guras; Callimachus, who had caused Lucullus such problems at Amisus,¹⁶⁹ was the man who exercised real power, thanks to his experience and his great skill as a military engineer. Lucullus pitched camp and tried every sort of siegecraft he could, then a little later took the city by storm.¹⁷⁰ Guras surrendered, and Lucullus treated him generously; Callimachus promised to show him some underground treasure-stores, but Lucullus was unmoved, and ordered him to be brought before him in chains. Now he would pay for that fire by which he had destroyed Amisus! For that fire had robbed Lucullus of the object of his ambition, which was to be generous to the Greeks.

33. So far Fortune, one might say, had followed as Lucullus's comrade. Now it was as if the favouring breeze had dropped.¹⁷¹ Everything required violence and everything incurred resistance. He certainly showed the courage and endurance of a good commander, but his achievements brought no glory or goodwill: indeed, he came close to losing that which he had won before, such were his misfortunes and so devious his course. And he himself must take a large part of the blame. He was not the man to court the ordinary soldier: if anything looked likely to please the men under his command, he was inclined to regard it as demeaning to himself and a threat to his position. And, most important of all, he could not get on with his equals, men of power and distinction. He disdainfully regarded them all as men of straw compared with himself. These, they say, were his flaws, though nature had endowed him well enough in many respects: he was physically impressive, it seems, and a fine and thoughtful speaker, as eloquent in politics as he was in the camp. Sallust traces the troops' bad feeling back to the beginnings of the war,¹⁷² at Cyzicus and then at Amisus, when they were forced to spend two successive winters in camp; in the following years too they wintered either in enemy land or in allied territory under canvas, and they resented it. Not once did Lucullus take his army into a city that was friendly or Greek.

That was the state of the troops; and now the demagogues at home furnished them with the most plausible of pretexts. Jealous of Lucullus, they accused him of lust for money and for power: that, they said, was why he was dragging on the war; he had virtually united under his command Cilicia, Asia, Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Pontus, Armenia and the whole country as far as the Phasis, and now he had destroyed Tigranes' palace – why, it was as if he had been sent to strip the kings, not conquer them. That was the phrase used by one of the praetors, Lucius Quinctius,¹⁷³ and it was largely his voice that persuaded them to send successors to take over Lucullus's province.¹⁷⁴ They voted too to release from service many of the soldiers under his command.

34. This was already serious enough, and now another factor intervened, one which did most of all to wreck Lucullus's achievements: this was Publius Clodius,¹⁷⁵ a man of arrogant violence, teeming with every brand of contempt and audacity. Lucullus was married to Clodius's sister,¹⁷⁶ a most loose-living lady. There was even talk that Clodius had slept with her himself. At this stage he was accompanying the campaign, and he was treated with less respect than he thought he deserved. His own view, indeed, was that he merited pride of place, though his character left him far behind many of his colleagues; so he began to court the Fimbriani¹⁷⁷ and stir them

up against Lucullus. His words were dishonourable, his audience receptive, and they knew all too well how to be courted: for these were the very men whom Fimbria had once persuaded to kill the consul Flaccus and choose himself as general instead.¹⁷⁸ They were not slow to welcome Clodius too, greeting him as a friend of the ordinary soldier. He spoke with spurious indignation. Would there be no end to these wars and these labours? Would they waste away their lives like this, fighting every race, trailing through every land? Had they earned nothing better for so great a campaign than to escort Lucullus's wagons and camels, straining under their cargoes of gold and jewelled goblets? What of Pompey's soldiers? They were already settled somewhere, contented citizens now, with wives and children;¹⁷⁹ they had a fertile land and cities to dwell in; yet they had not been the ones to chase Mithridates or Tigranes into uninhabited deserts, nor to destroy the royal palaces of Asia – they had simply fought some fugitives in Spain, some runaways in Italy.¹⁸⁰ 'Well then, if we cannot ever stop fighting, why not preserve what remains of our bodies and souls for a general like that, one who regards the riches of his men as his own greatest glory?'

These were their grievances, and they were enough to corrupt Lucullus's army. They did not follow him against Tigranes nor against Mithridates, who had driven into Pontus again from Armenia and regained his throne. Instead, they stayed in Gordyene.¹⁸¹ The winter was their excuse. In fact they were expecting Pompey, or some other general, to arrive any moment to take over Lucullus's command.

35. Then news arrived that Mithridates had defeated Fabius¹⁸² and was on the march against Sornatius and Triarius.¹⁸³ That finally shamed the troops into obedience. Triarius, convinced that victory was there for the taking, was eager to seize it before Lucullus could arrive¹⁸⁴ (he was not far away); a great battle ensued, and Triarius was defeated. Over 7,000 Romans are said to have died, including 150 centurions and twenty-four military tribunes,¹⁸⁵ and Mithridates captured the camp. Lucullus arrived a few days later to find that Triarius was being hunted by his own angry troops; he managed to smuggle him away.

Mithridates was unwilling to fight, preferring to wait for Tigranes, who was already making his way down from the mountains with a large army. Lucullus decided to strike before they could unite, and marched on Tigranes, eager to meet him once again – and, this time, to fight to the finish. But while he was on the road the Fimbriani mutinied and left their ranks. They had already been released from service by decree, they said; Lucullus had no more right to command; his provinces were already assigned to others.¹⁸⁶ Now Lucullus

stopped at nothing, however undignified, to win them back.¹⁸⁷ He pleaded with individuals and went round the tents, humbly and tearfully, and sometimes he even grasped their hands. But they repulsed his appeals. They threw him their empty purses: 'You know how to keep their riches for yourself,' they said – 'now fight them by yourself as well!' Still, the other soldiers intervened, and the Fimbriani grudgingly agreed to stay till the end of the summer.¹⁸⁸ If no one came down to fight them by then, they would leave. Lucullus could do nothing but agree, for the alternative was to let them go now and abandon the country to the enemy. So he kept them together, though there was no longer any question of forcing them on or leading them to battle: it was enough if they simply stayed. Tigranes was ravaging Cappadocia, Mithridates had regained his old arrogance and Lucullus could do nothing about it. His own dispatches to the senate had described Mithridates as crushed and destroyed;¹⁸⁹ now the senatorial envoys¹⁹⁰ arrived to organize the settlement of Pontus, as if affairs were already stable; yet they found Lucullus not even in command of his own person, but mocked and humiliated by his men. The soldiers' insolence to their general knew no bounds, and at the end of summer they even buckled on their armour and drew their swords, pretending to challenge the enemy. So where were they? They must have given up already! The men let out a cry and put on a show of shadow-fighting, then left the camp: the time had now passed, they swore, for which they had promised to stay.

As for the other soldiers, Pompey wrote to call on them to join him. By now he had been appointed general of the war¹⁹¹ against Mithridates and Tigranes. His popularity, together with the sycophancy of the demagogues, had seen to that. Not that the senate and the soundest of the citizens approved: they thought Lucullus had been treated outrageously.¹⁹² His successors were coming to take over his triumph, not his war; it was not his campaign, only its prizes, that he was being compelled to forfeit and to yield to others.

36. Those on the spot felt even more indignant. Lucullus had no control even over rewards or punishments for the deeds of war. Pompey would not allow anyone even to approach him, nor to pay any attention to his edicts or the arrangements he had agreed with the ten commissioners.¹⁹³ Pompey prevented that by publishing his own decrees instead, and his very presence was intimidating on account of his greater power. Still, the friends of the two men decided to bring them together. They met in a village in Galatia,¹⁹⁴ greeting one another warmly and congratulating each other on their successes, Lucullus the older man, Pompey with more prestige from his greater number of campaigns and his two triumphs.¹⁹⁵ Each was preceded by

lictors bearing the axes of office, and both sets of axes were wreathed with laurel to celebrate their victories.¹⁹⁶ But Pompey's laurels were withered after his long march through parched and waterless country; when Lucullus's lictors saw this, they generously gave them some of their own, which were fresh and green. Pompey's friends counted it a good omen; and so it indeed worked out, with Pompey's command owing its lustre to what Lucullus had achieved.

The two men talked, but no good came of it.¹⁹⁷ In fact they parted on even worse terms. Pompey countermanded Lucullus's dispositions; he also took away all Lucullus's soldiers, except for 1,600 to share his triumph, and even these were not at all enthusiastic for their general. Perhaps Lucullus was unfortunate in this respect, perhaps he simply lacked a general's most important gift. If only he had possessed that as well as all those other massive qualities – his bravery, his conscientiousness, his insight, his feeling for justice! – the Roman empire would not have stopped at the Euphrates, but would have extended to the ends of the continent and the Caspian Sea.¹⁹⁸ For Tigranes had already conquered the other races, while the power of Parthia was not yet what it proved to be at the time of Crassus:¹⁹⁹ it was smaller and less unified, and weakened by wars with its subjects and its neighbours – so weakened, indeed, that it was no match even for Armenian provocation.

My own view is that Lucullus did Rome much good, but even greater harm: the good through his own achievements, the harm through his effect on others. For those Armenian trophies, standing so close to the Parthians, and Tigranocerta, and Nisibis, and all the wealth brought to Rome, and Tigranes' captured diadem borne in his triumph:²⁰⁰ all these stirred Crassus towards Asia, and convinced him that the barbarian world was spoils and booty, nothing more. Then he met the arrows of Parthia. That showed that Lucullus owed his survival to his own daring and intelligence, not to any enemy folly or weakness. But that was later.

37. Lucullus now returned to Rome.²⁰¹ The first thing he found was that his brother Marcus had been indicted by Gaius Memmius:²⁰² the accusations related to certain actions of his as quaestor, when Marcus had been following Sulla's orders.²⁰³ Marcus was acquitted, but Memmius then shifted his attack to Lucullus himself,²⁰⁴ stirring up the people with charges that he had prolonged the war and pocketed many of its spoils, and he urged them to refuse Lucullus his triumph. Lucullus found himself embroiled in a fierce debate. The most prominent and powerful citizens²⁰⁵ mingled with the ordinary voters in the tribes, pleading with them and bringing every effort to bear; and they just managed to persuade the people to allow the triumph.²⁰⁶

Unlike some other triumphs, this one was not specially vulgar or sensational in the length of its procession and the number of objects displayed, though Lucullus did decorate the Flaminian Circus²⁰⁷ with the many arms he had captured from the enemy and with the royal siege-engines. And the spectacle itself was no light affair. The procession included a few cataphract cavalry and ten scythed chariots, and sixty of the royal friends and commanders; 110 bronze-prowed men-of-war were wheeled past, a six-foot gold statue of Mithridates himself, a jewelled shield, twenty displays of silver vessels and thirty-two of golden goblets, weapons and coin. All this was carried by men, but there were mules too. Eight carried golden couches, fifty-two smelted silver and another 107 bore nearly 2,700,000 pieces of silver coin. There were placards too recording the money he had already given to Pompey for the pirate war²⁰⁸ and to the public treasury, and also the 950 drachmas he had distributed to each soldier.²⁰⁹ In celebration he gave magnificent feasts for the city-dwellers and for the surrounding villages, the so-called *vici*.

38. He divorced the shameless and immoral Clodia²¹⁰ and married Servilia, Cato's sister.²¹¹ This marriage was no more successful than the last. Only one thing was missing from the previous sad story, and that was the scandal of incest with her brother.²¹² In every other respect Servilia was just as dreadful and dissolute as her predecessor. And Lucullus had to put up with it for Cato's sake, though he did eventually divorce her.

The senate were greatly cheered to have Lucullus back; they were full of hope that he would be their bulwark against Pompey's tyranny, the champion of the aristocracy, with his strong base of glory and power.²¹³ But he let them down, and abandoned public life. Perhaps it was his perception that politics were infected by an intractable malady; perhaps he had had his fill of glory, as some claim, and lapsed into a life of the most easy and relaxed luxury now that so many struggles and labours had come to so unhappy a conclusion. And there are those who praise him for this change of direction.²¹⁴ Much better this way than to be a Marius, who, after those Cimbrian victories²¹⁵ and those great and glorious successes, was unwilling to relax and enjoy his enviable prestige; instead the ageing Marius, with an insatiable lust for glory and power, had grappled with youthful political antagonists till he finally foundered amid terrible deeds and worse passions. In the same way it would have been better for Cicero to withdraw into retirement after Catiline,²¹⁶ they said, or for Scipio to pause after he had added the victory at Numantia to that at Carthage.²¹⁷ There was a sort of full circle even in political life, a time when public men needed to stop; statesmen, like athletes, became

ridiculous when they were beyond their peak and their strength was failing. But the followers of Pompey and Crassus just scoffed. Here he was, abandoning himself to this life of pleasure and extravagance: did he not realize that he was too old for dissipation, not for politics or command?²¹⁸

39. And indeed one can read Lucullus's life like an Old Comedy,²¹⁹ with the first parts full of politics and war, the later turning to drinking-bouts and banquets, even to rowdy serenades and night-time sprees and every kind of frivolity. For frivolity is the right word for his extravagant building, his elaborate colonnades, his baths, and especially his paintings and statues and all the energy he directed into that sort of art collection.²²⁰ It cost him immense sums, and he poured into it all the vast and magnificent wealth he had collected from his campaigns. Even now, after all the extraordinary increases in luxury, the Lucullan gardens are counted among the richest of the imperial parks.²²¹ Then there were his constructions along the coast and near Naples, with hills hanging on top of giant underground galleries, and moats of sea-water and fish-ponds winding around the mansions, and halls out to sea. When the Stoic Tubero²²² saw them, he called Lucullus the 'toga'd Xerxes'.²²³ Near Tusculum too he had a local residence,²²⁴ with panoramic terraces and elaborate banqueting-halls and porticoes, all spaciously open. Once Pompey stayed there, and twitted Lucullus for making a villa that was ideal in summer and uninhabitable in winter. Lucullus laughed. 'Cranes and storks know how to migrate with the seasons,' he said. 'Do you imagine I'm too stupid to do the same?' Then there was once a praetor who was making ambitious plans for a public show, and asked Lucullus for purple cloaks for his chorus. Lucullus said he would go and see if he had any; if he did, he would give them. The next day he asked the praetor how many he wanted; 'One hundred will do,' came the answer. Lucullus told him to take twice as many. That was what inspired the poet Horace's remark that wealth was not wealth, unless its greater part was invisible.²²⁵

40. There was still something of the nouveau riche about Lucullus's daily banquets: the purple coverlets, the jewelled goblets, the troupes of dancers, the cabaret; and more especially the variety of delicacies and exquisite flavourings. It was most enviable, but only to the boorish. Certainly, Pompey won respect on the occasion he was ill, and the doctor prescribed a diet of thrush. His servants protested that it was summer, and the only place to find a thrush was at Lucullus's home, where he would be fattening some for the pot. Pompey refused permission: 'So Pompey's life depends on Lucullus's table?' he said to the doctor, and told him to prescribe something easier to find. Cato

too, his friend and relative,²²⁶ found Lucullus's way of life most distasteful. Once in the senate a young man was giving a long, pompous and ill-judged speech on frugality and restraint, and Cato stood up to interrupt. 'You have Crassus's wealth, you live like Lucullus,' he said; 'don't speak like Cato'. (Some give the remark to someone else, not Cato himself.)²²⁷

41. Lucullus himself did not merely revel in the life, he was proud of it: that is clear enough from the anecdotes which are told. Once, for instance, he gave feast after feast to some Greek visitors to Rome. They were embarrassed, true Greeks as they were, and tried to deflect the invitations: it could not be right to have such daily expense on their account. Lucullus smiled, and said to them: 'Yes, some of this is on your account, my Greek friends; but most of it is on mine.' Then there was a time when he was dining alone, and a single table with a modest meal was prepared. He called in the servant responsible to be reprimanded. The servant replied that there were no guests, and so he had not thought Lucullus would want an expensive meal. 'What?' said Lucullus. 'Did you not realize that today Lucullus is Lucullus's guest?' All this naturally became the talk of the town, and once Cicero and Pompey came up to him when he was unoccupied in the forum. Cicero was a close friend, and Lucullus's relations with Pompey too were perfectly civilized, despite the continuing differences they had concerning the Eastern campaign. Cicero greeted Lucullus: 'May we ask you something?' he said. 'By all means,' answered Lucullus. 'We want to dine with you today,' said Cicero, 'but only on condition that we eat whatever you were planning to eat yourself.' Lucullus made a show of embarrassment, begging to be allowed to pick a different day. But they would not agree to that, nor allow him to speak to his servants: they wanted to make sure that he did not order anything beyond what was already being prepared. They allowed him only one request: that Lucullus should say to one of his servants in their presence that today he would dine in the Apollo room. (That was the name of one of his richly decorated halls.) This in fact was a clever trick, and it worked. For each banqueting room had a fixed tariff, to indicate what should be spent on a dinner; each too had a fixed set of cutlery, crockery and table decoration, so that when the slaves heard where he wished to dine they knew immediately how much to spend and how elaborately the dinner should be set up. The allowance for a dinner in the Apollo room was 50,000 drachmas, and that was what was spent on that occasion; and Pompey's party was astounded by the speed of the preparation as well as by the massive expense. That is how arrogantly Lucullus used his wealth, as if it was indeed a barbarian prisoner to be used at his will.²²⁸

42. More worthwhile were the efforts he spent on his books. He built up a large collection of beautifully copied volumes,²²⁹ and the use he made of them showed an even more creditable ambition than the collection itself. For the libraries were open to all,²³⁰ and he also freely admitted Greeks to the surrounding colonnades and study-rooms. It was like an Inn of the Muses, and people flocked there to spend time in each other's company, delighted to escape from their mundane activities. He often visited the colonnades himself, and would join the scholars at their discussions; he would help the Greek politicians too to obtain whatever they wanted. His house was a genuine home from home for the visitors to Rome, a pavilion of Greek culture. He was a receptive and sympathetic friend to all types of philosophy, but from the outset he had a special affection and enthusiasm for the Academy: not the 'New Academy', although it was flourishing at the time²³¹ thanks to Philo's support of Carneades' teachings,²³² but the Old, then represented most eloquently and persuasively by Antiochus of Ascalon.²³³ Lucullus took great pains to make Antiochus his friend and companion, and he entered the fray himself as the Old Academy's champion against the students of Philo.²³⁴ This last group included Cicero,²³⁵ who composed a most elegant literary work on the subject of the School. In it he gave the case for direct perception to Lucullus and the opposing one to himself, and the work is entitled *Lucullus*.²³⁶

As I have said,²³⁷ Cicero and Lucullus were close friends and political associates; for Lucullus's retirement from public life was not total. True, he immediately abandoned any thought of pre-eminence, thinking that this sort of ambition and struggle was not free of danger or violence. When he renounced any aspiration to first place, his role passed instead to Crassus and Cato, who were immediately advanced as the senate's champions²³⁸ – those who were suspicious of Pompey's power saw to that. But Lucullus would go down to the forum to support his friends, and he even attended the senate on any occasion when it was necessary to talk down an initiative or ambition of Pompey's. He managed to secure the rejection of the dispositions that Pompey made after his victory over the kings; then, when Pompey himself proposed a distribution of land to his soldiers, Lucullus made sure that it was turned down,²³⁹ with Cato supporting him. The result was that Pompey was driven into a friendship with Crassus and Caesar, or rather a conspiracy;²⁴⁰ he filled the city with arms and soldiers and forced through his measures, throwing the supporters of Cato and Lucullus out of the forum.²⁴¹

The soundest citizens were horrified at what was going on. But then Pompey's men produced a certain Vettius, and claimed that they had caught him plotting against Pompey.²⁴² When he was cross-examined in the senate he gave evidence against several others, then, before the

people, he named Lucullus: the claim was that Lucullus had set him up to kill Pompey. No one believed it. It was immediately clear that the man had been put up to it by Pompey's supporters themselves, with the object of incriminating Lucullus unfairly. And everything became even clearer a few days later, when Vettius's body was thrown out of the prison. They said he had died of natural causes, but there were clear signs that he had been beaten up and throttled. It looked as if the people who had set him up had now killed him.

43. This turned Lucullus even further away from political life, and his retirement became complete once Cicero went into exile and Cato was dispatched to Cyprus.²⁴³ Before Lucullus died it is said that he lost his mental powers in a gradual decline. Cornelius Nepos²⁴⁴ claims that it was not age nor disease that took away his mind, but it was caused by drugs, administered by one of his freedmen called Callisthenes. The drugs (says Nepos) were given him to win his affections for Callisthenes,²⁴⁵ for this was supposed to be their effect; but in fact they weakened and destroyed his intellect, so that even before his death his brother Marcus²⁴⁶ had to take over his property to administer.

But when he died²⁴⁷ it was just as if he was still at the height of his power as general and statesman. The ordinary people grieved and gathered in numbers; his pallbearers, selected from young nobles, were bearing his body to the forum, but the people tried to force a burial in the Campus Martius, where they had buried Sulla.²⁴⁸ That was quite unexpected as well as impractical, and his brother begged them to desist; eventually he managed to persuade them to allow the burial to go forward as planned on the Tusculum estate. Nor did Marcus himself survive much longer.²⁴⁹ Just as he was a close follower of Lucullus in age and glory, so he proved the closest of brothers even in the timing of his death.

COMPARISON OF CIMON AND LUCULLUS

1 (44). Lucullus can indeed be seen as fortunate in the time of his death. It came before the revolution which Destiny¹ was already beginning to engineer against the Roman constitution and bring about through civil war. He ended his days at a time when the state was ailing but was still free. That, in fact, is the most striking point that he shares with Cimon, for Cimon too died when the Greek world was still at the peak of its strength and had not yet been thrown into chaos. But Cimon died in his camp and on campaign, unlike Lucullus who had given up his career and lost his way; Cimon was not the man to regard feasting and drinking as the crowning prize of combat and command and victory, rather as Plato makes fun of the Orphics for saying that the reward in the Underworld for a good life is eternal drunkenness.² Leisure, relaxation and engagement with pleasurable and reflective scholarship make a most suitable pursuit for an elderly man, and can give him comfort in his retirement from war and politics; but it is another matter to turn all one's glorious achievements into living just for pleasure, to spend the rest of one's time in a sort of carnival holiday from fighting and command, and to devote oneself to luxury and frivolity. That is not worthy of the great Academy nor of someone who expressed admiration for Xenocrates;³ that is the mark rather of someone inclining towards Epicureanism. What is remarkable is that Cimon's life was the opposite: in his case it was his youth that attracted criticism for its immorality,⁴ whereas Lucullus's early years were cultured and restrained. The better of the two is the one who made the change for the better; it is a sign of a superior character when the worse aspects go into decline and the better reach their peak.

The two men were equally wealthy, but used their wealth differently. For there is no equivalence at all between the south wall of the Acropolis, constructed with the money brought in by Cimon,⁵ and those bed-chambers at Naples and those seaside belvederes that Lucullus built from his barbarian spoils.⁶ Nor should one compare Lucullus's table with Cimon's, the extravagant and sultan-like with the democratic and generous. For Cimon's table fed many people every day at small expense,⁷ while Lucullus's cost a very great deal to feed

just a few luxury-seekers.⁸ Or, at least, that is so unless one thinks that time makes a critical difference. It is impossible to tell whether Cimon would have adopted a more ostentatious and pleasurable lifestyle if he had retired from his military career into a peaceful and apolitical old age; he certainly enjoyed his drink and his festivals and had a bad reputation for his womanizing, as I have said.⁹ Successes in a public career bring different pleasures of their own, and leave ambitious, political people no time and no thought for the lower desires. Equally, if Lucullus had been killed in action on campaign, I do not think that even the most fault-finding and captious of critics would have found any grounds to criticize him. That is all I have to say on their lifestyle.

2 (45). To turn to their achievements in war: each, clearly, had a good record in combat on both land and sea. Just as athletes who win the wrestling and the pancration on a single day are customarily known as ‘winners extraordinary’, so Cimon deserves precedence as a general for crowning Greece with land and sea trophies on the same day.¹⁰ Lucullus owed his supremacy to his country while Cimon’s country owed theirs to him; one took over a land that ruled its allies and added to it the possessions of the enemy, the other took a land that was a follower and made it a leader of its allies and a conqueror of its foes, forcing the Persians to abandon the sea in defeat and persuading the Spartans to give it up willingly.

If the greatest achievement of a commander is to generate obedience through goodwill, Lucullus was treated with scorn by his own soldiers¹¹ while Cimon was held in wonder by the allies. People revolted from the one man and to the other. Lucullus came back abandoned by the men whom he had gone out commanding; Cimon was sent with a force to do the bidding of others, and returned giving the orders himself. He ended by achieving for the city the three most difficult things of all, peace with the enemy, supremacy granted by the allies and good relations with the Spartans.

Both of them tried to bring down great empires and conquer all Asia, and both left the task unfinished.¹² In Cimon’s case failure came once and for all, and it was through bad luck: he died in command and at the height of his success. Lucullus, though, has to take some of the blame himself, whether it was through ignorance or through failure to do anything about the grievances and recriminations in his camp that led to such hostility. Yet might this be a point in common with Cimon? For Cimon’s fellow-citizens too brought lawsuits against him and finally ostracized him, so that (as Plato put it)¹³ for ten years they would not hear his voice. Aristocratic characters have little in common with the ordinary, pleasure-seeking citizen; very often their imposition of corrective measures gives pain like the bandages applied

by doctors, even if they are righting dislocations and putting bodies back to their natural state. Perhaps we should acquit both men on this count.

3 (46). Lucullus did much better in war. He was the first Roman to get beyond the Taurus in arms,¹⁴ and crossed the Tigris,¹⁵ and captured and burned the royal residences of Asia – Tigranocerta, Cabeira, Sinope, Nisibis¹⁶ – before the kings' very eyes; he conquered in the north as far as Phasis, in the east as far as Media, in the south as far as the Red Sea through the kings of Arabia;¹⁷ he crushed the kings' power and failed only to capture their persons as they fled away like animals into deserts and pathless and impenetrable forests. One has only to look at the way that the Persians immediately faced up to the Greeks again, indicating that they had not suffered greatly at Cimon's hands, and went on to defeat and destroy his great force in Egypt,¹⁸ whereas after Lucullus there was no further substantial achievement of Tigranes and Mithridates. The one was already weak and shattered by the first encounters, and he did not even venture out from his camp to make a show of force before Pompey;¹⁹ instead, he fled to Bosphorus and ended his days there.²⁰ The other, Tigranes, threw himself down naked and undefended before Pompey, and took his diadem from his head and placed it at Pompey's feet;²¹ so he flattered Pompey with something that he did not own himself, but that had already been the subject of Lucullus's triumph – for Tigranes was certainly delighted to get back the emblems of kingship as if he had lost them before.²² The better general, just like the better athlete, is the one who hands over his opponent in a weaker state to the next contestant. What is more, Cimon came on the scene when the Great King's power was already deeply shaken and the Persian spirit humbled by their massive defeats and unceasing withdrawals at the hands of Themistocles, Pausanias and Leotychidas,²³ and so he easily conquered their bodies when their minds had already been defeated and had collapsed; Lucullus faced Tigranes when the king was unconquered and confident after many battles. In terms of numbers, there is no comparison between those defeated by Cimon and those who gathered to fight Lucullus.

So, all in all, the verdict is difficult, the more so because Heaven itself²⁴ seems to have looked kindly on both of them, indicating to the one man what he needed to achieve and to the other the dangers that threatened.²⁵ It looks as if the gods themselves have voted for each of them in turn as a man of goodness and of godlike nature.

YOUNGER CATO

INTRODUCTION TO YOUNGER CATO

When Sallust wrote his *War with Catiline*, he made the climax of his work the tense senatorial debate on the conspirators' fate, with Caesar speaking for leniency and Cato, successfully, for execution. He added two chapters comparing Caesar and Cato, the two outstanding, but very different, examples of *uirtus* ('manly excellence') in his own generation (Sall. *Cat.* 53–4). Debate and digression together occupy over 20 per cent of the monograph, and come close to overbalancing a work where the expected protagonists would be Catiline and Cicero. Yet the emphasis fits a Sallustian pattern: just as his *Jugurtha* traces the origins of the rift between Marius and Sulla that was to dominate a political generation, so here he fastens on the first rift between the two politicians whose antagonism was to dominate the last years of the Republic. The Civil War was eventually fought between Caesar and Pompey, but the real ideological battle of the fifties and early forties was between Caesar and Cato, or at least between all that those two men stood for.

That made Cato a critical figure for Plutarch's biographical project. And it meant that he had no shortage of material to deal with, for Cato's figure became a focus for propagandist exchanges within a year of his death. First Cicero and then Brutus published a Cato:¹ the content of both was surely laudatory – indeed, so much so in Brutus's case that it offended Cicero himself, who was put out by what he saw as an underemphasis on Cicero's own role in the Catilinarian debate (Cic. *Att.* 12.21). A further work followed from the Epicurean Fabius Gallus in praise of the Stoic Cato (Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.24–5): the political battle clearly transcended philosophical differences. On the other side first Hirtius replied to Cicero, then in early 45 Caesar wrote his own *Anticato* (or *Anticatos*: there seem to have been two volumes, anyway); for Plutarch this tarnished Caesar's own glory, for it was undignified to vent so much spleen on the dead – but he also notes that this was out of character for Caesar, who was normally generous to his enemies

(*Caes.* 54), and the effort he spent on it is to be attributed less to spite than to the continuing relevance of the ideological battle. Augustus too, for all his respect for Brutus (*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 5), wrote in his old age ‘a reply to Brutus on the subject of Cato’. Plutarch may not have known any of these works directly, except perhaps for the *Anticato(s)* (below), but the partisan nature of these early exchanges has still left its mark on his account.

Not, Rome being Rome, that the exchanges confined themselves to ideology: all sorts of personal details clearly figured in the mud-slinging – Cato’s heavy drinking, his sloppy dressing, his questionable treatment of his wives. Those themes too filter into Plutarch’s work (chs. 6, 7, 25, 44, 52), partly no doubt by way of other intermediary works, first the memoir of Cato’s friend and companion Munatius Rufus and then the treatment one hundred years later by Thrasea Paetus under Nero. Thrasea, so Plutarch himself says, followed Munatius ‘as his main authority’ (ch. 37 with n. 192), and cited him on at least one crucial point (Cato’s divorce of Marcia: ch. 25). Munatius clearly did not avoid discussing the more dubious side of Cato’s character and behaviour, and indeed some of that dubious behaviour centred on Cato’s treatment of Munatius himself: Cato does not come out well from the account of their quarrel (chs. 36–7). The same is true of the various chapters detailing Cato’s relations with the women of his family, where again it is not difficult to detect hints of Munatius’s account (chs. 7, 25, 52). But still the overall texture of his work was doubtless enthusiastic, and that would have been even more true of Thrasea’s version. By then the hagiography of Cato had begun, as we can see in Lucan and in Seneca: ‘the gods have given to us in Cato a better example of wisdom than they gave to earlier generations in Odysseus or Hercules’, says Seneca (*De constantia sapientis* 2.1), and in dealing with the charge of drunkenness he exclaims that ‘it will be easier to make the charge itself a compliment than to blacken Cato!’ (*De tranquillitate animi* 17.9).

Yet it was the political stance for freedom, and particularly the noble death – ‘the perfect act’ – that interested Seneca.² No wonder he became the archetype for what is sometimes called the ‘Stoic opposition’ to the emperors: men like Thrasea himself and Helvidius Priscus took Cato as their standard-bearer as they blazoned their refusal to co-operate with an emperor of whom they disapproved. Such displays could have only one outcome for the recalcitrant individuals, and their enforced suicides were themselves often self-consciously modelled on those of Socrates and Cato.³ These in their turn gave rise to a curious sub-genre of biographical literature. In the proem to *Agricola* (2.1) Tacitus mentions Arulenus Rusticus’s laudatory Life of Thrasea and Herennius Senecio’s of Helvidius

Priscus, both of which proved fatal to the courageous authors; a little later C. Fannius and Titinius Capito wrote, apparently less lethally to themselves, a collection of ‘the deaths of those killed or exiled by Nero’ or ‘the deaths of famous men’ (Pliny *Epistulae* 5.5.3, 8.12.4–5). Such accounts, it seems, concentrated especially on the men’s trials and death-scenes, and have left their influence on Books 15–16 of Tacitus’s *Annals* and on the *Agricola* itself.

Plutarch probably knew such literature. Arulenus Rusticus, the ill-fated biographer of Thrasea, apparently figured among his own acquaintance, for at *On Inquisitiveness* 522d–e Plutarch tells of a scene which the emperor Domitian might have taken badly: Plutarch was lecturing at Rome, Arulenus was in the audience, and when a letter was brought to him from the emperor he laid it aside until the lecture was finished. In this Life Plutarch traces the ways that Cato was an inspiration in his own lifetime, with recurrent emphasis on his charismatic impact on his friends and followers (chs. 16, 18, 32, 36, 46, 64, 65, 66, 69–71, 73). He would have been all too aware of the way that Cato’s ghost continued to be an inspiration still.

All this posed Plutarch a problem of an unusual sort. So often he was weaving biography out of a dearth of suitable material, making the most of slight hints in historical accounts; but here there was a vast amount of material and a number of treatments that had already cast it into biographical form. The difficulty was to select from and modulate that material in such a way as to make Cato fit the series as a whole, and he does this with some deftness. The death-scene is admittedly extensive, and (again like the *Agricola*) may have something of the texture of those ‘deaths of famous men’: but this is not the only Life which gives a large canvas to memorable last days (*Alexander*, *Pompey*, *Nicias*, *Gracchi*, *Antony*), and in choosing as the parallel Greek hero Phocion, the statesman whom the Athenian assembly condemned to death under Macedonian pressure in 318 BCE, he anyway committed himself to an elaborate treatment of their similar ends.

The hagiographic aspects formed another problem. Plutarch certainly intends his Lives to have an exemplary element, and guide people how to live better (General Intro. II); but even his most enthusiastic portraits – *Pericles*, *Aristides*, *Camillus* – have their darker shades and raise thought-provoking moral issues, and his Cato is no exception. One set of issues is raised by those questions that figured in the propaganda exchanges – the drunkenness, the sloppy dress, the treatment of the women. Plutarch faces all of them head-on. But there was a more fundamental question, one that concerned all Cato’s politics. One had to admire his ‘unbending, impassive and totally steadfast character’ (ch. 1), and especially his resolve and his

constancy in resisting Caesar – and not just Caesar, but others too, especially Pompey, who threatened the constitution. But was he *right*? In particular, was he right to set about it in the way he did?

The question is raised in the proem to the pair. Plutarch has explained that Phocion was ‘a politician guiding the shipwreck of the city’, an Athens that, unlike Cato’s Rome, was a mere shadow of its glory-days self. Times like that require a gentle and diplomatic political style, not confronting a hostile people too directly, but picking the moment for a timely show of strong leadership – and not just times like that, for Plutarch’s views here are not too distant from those he expresses more generally in his *Advice on Public Life*. The *Phocion* proem goes on:

The experience of the younger Cato was similar. For he was another whose character did not carry conviction with the people nor win their affection, and he too would not play to the gallery to win political success. Cicero remarks⁴ that he conducted his politics as if he was living in Plato’s Republic and not in the sewer of the Roman people, and says that this was why he failed to win the consulship. I would myself compare this to the way people regard fruit that appears out of season: they are glad to see it and are amazed by it, but do not eat it. In the same way Cato’s old-fashioned ways, coming into conflict as they did after so many generations with corrupted lives and degenerate characters, brought him great repute and fame, but were not fitting to the needs of the time: the gravity and greatness of such virtue was out of keeping with the circumstances in which he was operating. For he too, in a country that was not already in decline, like Phocion’s, but was in a stormy and turbulent time, did his best to lay hold of the sails and cables and take his stand next to those who had more power – and even though he was pushed away from rudder and helm, he nevertheless did not allow Fortune to win without a fight. It was through others that Fortune captured and destroyed the state, but only just, and only slowly, and only over a long period of time: indeed, the state very nearly survived thanks to Cato and Cato’s virtue. The comparison we are drawing with Phocion is not because of their shared character as good men and good politicians: for there can perfectly well be differences between two forms of bravery, as with Alcibiades and Epaminondas, or of intelligence, as with Themistocles and Aristides, or of justice, as with Numa and Agesilaus. But the virtues of these two men show a single stamp and form and colouring of character down to the last and tiniest detail, and it is as if the mixture of rigidity and generosity, of bravery and caution, of concern for others and fearlessness on their own behalf, of the avoidance of disgrace and of the vigorous pursuit of justice, was ladled out in exactly the same measure in either case. We will need a very fine discrimination as an instrument to discover and define the differences.

(*Phoc.* 3)

In itself that conclusion is a surprising one, as Phocion’s politics were not overwhelmingly similar to Cato’s: Phocion was less confrontational than Cato, had a much warier approach to freedom rhetoric and was readier to seek accommodations with the men of

power, in his case the threatening kings of Macedonia. But that passage still highlights the high principles that both men applied to politics, and the overwhelming forces that both had to face: that basic clash of principle and power forms the central theme of this pair.

There is much else in the passage that will recur in the narrative itself (indeed, it prepares the narrative of *Younger Cato* rather better than the narrative of *Phocion*). Here too Cato's intransigence does not escape criticism: his refusal of a marriage alliance with Pompey was eventually catastrophic in its consequences, and the chronology of the events of 60–59 is tweaked in order to give the point more prominence (chs. 30–31 and nn. 148, 160). The capacity of Cato's righteousness to get under people's skin is also recurrently stressed (chs. 8, 14, 36, 39, 40, 44, 49). At the same time the overwhelming tone of the narrative, as of that introductory chapter of *Phocion*, is one of admiration. Even at times where Cato's moral stance is criticized as too unbending, it is never hard to understand this 'fanatical version of a virtue that fought for justice and for good' (ch. 26): the behaviour of his antagonists, Pompey and especially Caesar, is represented in much more damning language here than in their own Lives (the denunciation of Caesar in the Catilinarian debate, for instance, is more powerful in ch. 23 than it is in *Caesar* 8, and this Life has much more detail than *Pompey* or *Caesar* on the urban violence of the fifties), and Plutarch keeps coming back indignantly to the *Anticato*(s) in order to rebut Caesar's scurrilous and unworthy attacks (chs. 11, 36, 52, 54, 57). Several times, especially in the narrative of the fifties, Plutarch employs verbal echoes to suggest that any confrontational behaviour of Cato is only repaying his opponents in their own coin, and in a more restrained form (nn. 122, 233): they had it coming. The recurrent use of the language of 'fighting' or 'struggles' or 'contests' – the Greek word is *agon* – reinforces the impression of two sides playing similar violent games (chs. 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 41, 42, 53, 54), with Cato's as the nobler cause. But we may also sense that in these sorts of violent exchanges there will be only one winner, and it will not be Cato.

Cato's virtue is at its clearest in the final chapters. Those may come close to the texture of those 'deaths of famous men', but it is noteworthy that Plutarch's emphasis falls not on the death itself – that indeed is rather undignified – but on the concern he showed for others before he died. Some of the language of the introduction to *Phocion* prepares for this emphasis too, not merely 'concern for others and fearlessness on [his] own behalf' but also 'bravery and caution', for those qualities too were at their most evident in the concern he showed for the people under his command during the war (chs. 53–6), and particularly for the citizens of Utica (chs. 58–72). Whatever the

downside of Cato's character might have been, that was truly exemplary.

In many ways this Life fits Plutarch's biographical programme (General Intro. II) more clearly than others. It is full of anecdotes and small details (notice ch. 24: 'Perhaps I should include even tiny indications of characters, as if I were sketching an image of the soul', and ch. 37: 'I have spent time on this [the quarrel with Munatius] because I think it just as telling as Cato's great public actions in giving the reader illumination and insight into the man's character'); it is rich in material on private life; it describes actions with a heavy moral perspective; but it shows too how Plutarch's moralizing can be subtle and nuanced, highlighting the exemplary where it is to be found, but also acknowledging that a person and a set of motives can be thoroughly admirable while the actions stemming from those motives can be more questionable. We shall see something similar in *Brutus*, where it is made more explicit that, however much one may admire a principled stance in favour of freedom, nonetheless Caesar was the right man for Rome (*Comp. Dion-Brut.* 2; General Intro. I). One can be admirable, but wrong. The tones of *Younger Cato*, especially its conclusion, are such that so large a reservation would not sit comfortably in this text, and indeed that introduction to *Phocion* leaves the impression that it would have been an unequivocally good thing if the state had 'survived thanks to Cato and Cato's virtue'. But even here we are given some sense that the practicalities of politics posed moral questions that could be answered in more than one way, and that Cato's way was not always right.

So this is an exploration, but a nuanced one, of the philosopher in politics; and for much of the time it is indeed 'the philosopher', rather than 'the Stoic'. When it is simply a question of adopting a moral stance on politics, differentiation among different philosophical schools is rarely important: there is something about philosophers, the way they think and particularly the way that they are prepared to stand up for the way they think, that prescribes a principled line in opposition to the unscrupulous men of power, and here the Stoic Cato belongs foursquare with the Academics Dion and Brutus (and Phocion too had studied at the Academy, *Phoc.* 4, 14). But in the *Younger Cato* the specifics of Stoicism are also sometimes relevant, especially the emphasis that Stoicism put on a rigid, pitiless interpretation of justice (ch. 4) or the teaching 'that the good person alone is free, that all those who are deficient are slaves' (ch. 67), and Plutarch also leaves no doubt that it was the more extreme tenets of Stoicism that left Cato open to Cicero's ridicule (ch. 21). Here it may well be that 'Cato's natural inflexibility is encouraged and reinforced by his commitment to Stoicism'.⁵ As far as those extreme tenets go, Plutarch's own

philosophical views would have not been sympathetic to Cato: his opposition to extreme Stoicism, though not as fierce as to Epicureanism, is made clear in his philosophical essays.⁶ Cato's Stoicism is also particularly relevant when it comes to his final decision for suicide,⁷ as the discussion at ch. 67 makes clear, and here too Plutarch tempers his admiration for the man's resolve with a certain reserve about the decision: 'And indeed it is true that, if Cato had brought himself to accept safety from Caesar, he would not so much have disgraced his own reputation as added lustre to Caesar's' (ch. 72). To adopt a distinction drawn by Cicero within two years of Cato's death (*Off.* 1.112), it might have been right for Cato to act like this – but Plutarch avoids the impression that it would be right for everyone.

Still, it is not just Stoicism that is relevant at the end, for the crucial figure in the background is Socrates. There are several hints of this throughout the *Life*, for instance in the way that the sloppy dressing as praetor 'without shoes or tunic' (chs. 6, 44), something that links him with the picture of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* (n. 230); this was a way in which Phocion too proclaimed his Socratic way of life (*Phoc.* 4). The *Symposium* also emerges in the comparison of Cato's manic follower Favonius with Socrates' devoted Apollodorus (*Cato* 46 and nn. 242–3).⁸ It is in the closing chapters of *Younger Cato* that the presence of Socrates is most felt, as in those of the paired *Life* where Phocion drank the hemlock and 'Phocion's fate reminded the Greeks of that of Socrates, as they reflected on the close similarities in the mistakes the Athenians had made and the misfortunes that befell the city' (*Phoc.* 38, the closing words of the *Life*). Now Cato primes himself for his death by reading the *Phaedo*, and reading it twice (chs. 68, 70); his care for his companions again recalls that of Socrates, though the predicament they face is more immediate and hard-edged in Cato's Utica than in facing a life without Socrates in the Athens of 399 BCE. The effect of the comparison must largely be to elevate Cato: this is indeed the Roman Socrates.⁹ And yet even here there is a darker hint, as the tranquil serenity of Socrates' end contrasts with the messiness of Cato's, a messiness for which Cato himself is partly responsible, because he damaged his hand while striking a slave and could not therefore impart enough force to the fatal blow (chs. 68, 70); nor should we forget that Socrates' death, like Phocion's, was genuinely enforced, while Cato's was not. The difficulties and complexities of applying philosophical models to real life are felt as well as the underlying value of making the attempt.

Much of Plutarch's narrative, especially of the politics of the late sixties and fifties, is closely similar to the narratives he gives in the other *Lives* of the period, particularly *Pompey* and *Caesar*, and also to

the account of Appian in his *Civil Wars*: it is overwhelmingly likely that he draws much, probably most, of this material from Asinius Pollio (General Intro. III). Even the detailed version of the final scenes in Utica may well draw at least its skeleton from Pollio: at least, the briefer version in Appian (*Civil Wars* 2.98–100) shows a tellingly similar emphasis. But, especially but not only for those events, Plutarch would have had access to a rich vein of biographical material with which he could supplement Pollio. He may not have known much of the early pamphleteering literature at first hand, except (possibly) for the *Anticato*(s) of Caesar himself; but he drew a great deal from Munatius Rufus, either at first hand or, more likely, through the intermediary version of Thræsea Paetus.¹⁰ It will be no coincidence that Plutarch is particularly full on events where Munatius was present or may have had inside knowledge, such as Cato's military tribunate and his travels in Asia (chs. 9–15), or his administration of Cyprus (chs. 34–9), or those dealings with his women (chs. 25, 30, 37). Some of the material on the violence of the fifties may also come from here. But Munatius, it seems, was not present at Utica, so could not have described the last episode at first hand (which does not mean that he did not describe it at all); but one or more of the intellectual figures mentioned among Cato's entourage, Demetrius, Apollonides, Statilius, Cleanthes or Boutas, might well have published a description,¹¹ or at least served as an oral source for Munatius or for, say, Brutus (or even for Pollio). There may be the odd trace too of first-hand reading of Cicero, whether this was read specifically for this Life or earlier for *Cicero* itself (chs. 44 and n. 234, 50 and n. 259: cf. General Intro. III); possibly also a distant recollection of that Sallustian comparison of Caesar and Cato (ch. 9 and n. 48), which again may date from Plutarch's reading for *Cicero*. Cato's example also figured frequently in rhetorical exercises of the early principate,¹² and Plutarch's alertness, for instance, to the moral issues raised by his divorce and remarriage of his wife (ch. 25 and n. 111) may well owe something to this influence.

All the more credit to Plutarch, then: despite the unusually rich and ideologically or rhetorically charged nature of this source material, he has crafted a Life that sits comfortably within the series of Parallel Lives while conveying a distinctive tone of admiration as well as some reserve.

*

Phocion–Younger Cato is one of four pairs that lack a final comparative epilogue (the others are *Themistocles–Camillus*, *Pyrrhus–Marius* and *Alexander–Caesar*). Some scholars have thought that Plutarch wrote epilogues for these and they have been lost; others have argued that,

for particular reasons, he chose not to write them in these cases. I take this second view.¹³ If it is right, he may have decided not to write an epilogue simply because the ending of *Younger Cato* is so fine and moving that additional reflections would spoil it (particularly if they included, as they might have had to do, more general reservations about Cato's politics); or possibly, if Plutarch really believed that 'the virtues of these two men show a single stamp and form and colouring of character down to the last and tiniest detail' (*Phoc.* 3, quoted above), he may have felt that the discrimination of fine differences would be artificial and pettifogging.¹⁴

YOUNGER CATO

[95–46 BCE]

1. Cato's family owed the origin of its prominence and fame to his great-grandfather Cato, a man whose virtue brought him greater fame and power than any other Roman of his day, as I have explained in his own Life.¹ Our Cato was left an orphan² together with his brother Caepio³ and his sister Porcia;⁴ he also had a half-sister on his mother's side, Servilia.⁵ All of these were brought up by Livius Drusus, who was his mother's uncle⁶ and was the leading politician of the day.⁷ He was a powerful speaker and a man of unusual good sense, and he was second to none in his breadth of vision and mental stature.

From his earliest youth, so it is said, Cato's unbending, impassive and totally steadfast character became clear in his words and his appearance and even the way he played. When he was determined to do something, he carried it through with an effectiveness beyond his years; he was rude and hostile to flatterers, but even more dismissive of those who tried to intimidate him. It was hard to make him laugh; just occasionally his face softened into a smile. He was not swift to anger or bad-tempered, but when he did become cross he was difficult to placate. When he grew old enough to start his lessons, he was slow to pick things up, but once he had grasped something he had it firmly in his mind and his memory. There is nothing unusual about this: the gifted can often bring things back to mind, but the people who have to struggle to learn things are the ones whose memories are really retentive,⁸ for it is as if each piece of knowledge is burned into the soul. It is likely too that Cato's stubborn character made the learning process more laborious for him, for learning is a matter of acceptance of external stimuli, and those who can resist least tend to be the ones who are quick to believe what they are told. That is why young people are more easily convinced than old, and sick people than healthy, and in general why those with the least capacity to be puzzled find it easiest to pile up new knowledge. Still, Cato (so they say) was willing to obey his tutor and do everything he was told, but demanded the reason for everything and kept asking 'why'; for he was fortunate in this tutor, a civilized man who preferred to explain things to his pupil than to box his ears. His name was Sarpedon.

2. Cato was still a young child at the time when the allies of Rome⁹ were agitating to be given the Roman citizenship. There was one occasion when a certain Poppaedius Silo,¹⁰ a general with a big military reputation and a friend of Drusus, was staying with them in the house for several days, and he got to know the children. 'Come on,' he said, 'why don't you ask your uncle to support us in our campaign for the citizenship?' Caepio smiled and said he would, but Cato said nothing, and just gave the visitors a fierce frown. 'What about you, young man?' asked Poppaedius. 'Can't you give your guests a helping hand with your uncle, just like your brother?' Cato did not utter a word, but his silence and his facial expression made it clear that he was refusing. So Poppaedius lifted him up and held him over an open window, pretending he was going to let him go. 'Say yes, or I'll throw you out!' he said, making his voice more threatening, and he held the little boy out and shook him to and fro over the window. This went on for a time, and Cato stayed completely impervious and unafraid; so Poppaedius put him down, and said quietly to his friends, 'Italy is lucky that this is still a boy; if he was a grown man, we would not get a single vote in the assembly.'

Then there was an occasion when a relative held a birthday party and Cato was among the guests. The games included one where younger and older boys were mixing together in a certain part of the house, playing at holding trials and giving prosecution speeches and hauling away the accused for punishments. One of those put on trial was a good-looking younger boy, and an older lad took him away into a separate room and locked the door; the boy called out to Cato for help. Cato immediately realized what was happening, and forced his way into the room past those who were standing guard and trying to prevent him, then led the boy away and angrily took him home. The other boys followed them.

3. He became very well known, as the following incident shows. At one point Sulla put on a festival performance of the equestrian ceremony called the *Lusus Troiae*.¹¹ He gathered together the boys of the nobility and appointed two leaders. The other boys were willing to accept one of them for his mother's sake, for he was the son of Sulla's wife Metella;¹² but they would not agree to practise with or follow the other one, Pompey's nephew Sextus.¹³ Sulla asked who they wanted instead, and they all cried out 'Cato'. Sextus himself gave way and yielded the position of honour to Cato as the better candidate.

Sulla himself happened to be a family friend, and on one occasion invited them in and talked to them in a friendly way – not something that he did often, given the majesty of his office and power and the heavy way in which he exercised them. Sarpedon made a great deal of

this, thinking it a matter not merely of his charge's honour but also of his future safety, and so he would regularly take Cato to Sulla's house to greet him. At that time it looked like an infernal punishment place, so many were the people being led there and tortured. Cato was thirteen years old.¹⁴ The heads of respected citizens were being carried out, and bystanders were trying to conceal their groans; as Cato looked on, he asked Sarpedon why no one had killed this man. 'They fear him more than they hate him, my boy,' replied Sarpedon. 'Why not give me a sword myself, then,' said Cato, 'so that I might kill him and liberate my country?'¹⁵ When Sarpedon heard this and saw the look on the boy's face, full of anger and resolution, he was so afraid that from that time onwards he kept a close watch on him in case he might try anything rash.

When he was still very young, he was asked who was his best friend, and he replied, 'My brother.' And who was his second best? 'My brother, again.' And the third? Back came the same answer, until after several more tries the questioner gave up.¹⁶ When he grew older, his affection for his brother took even firmer form. At the age of twenty he would not eat nor travel nor go down to the forum unless Caepio was with him. But when his brother took perfume, Cato refused it, and in matters of personal lifestyle he was strict and austere. Caepio himself was respected for his restraint and moderation, and when asked about it he admitted that this was true when he was compared with anyone else: 'But when I compare my life to Cato's,' he said, 'I think I'm just as bad as Sittius.' (This Sittius was notorious for his luxurious and decadent lifestyle.)¹⁷

4. Cato moved out of the family house when he was appointed a priest of Apollo,¹⁸ and divided up the family estate: his share came to 120 talents.¹⁹ He then adopted an even more ascetic lifestyle, and became friendly with Antipater of Tyre, a Stoic philosopher.²⁰ Cato's interest was particularly in the Stoics' ethical and political teaching: he was almost fanatically concerned with all the virtues, but was particularly devoted to that doctrine concerning the good which taught that a concern for justice should be rigid and unbending in excluding any sense of mercy, favour, or gratitude.

He trained himself in rhetoric too, regarding it as a tool for dealing with the people;²¹ he would say that political philosophy, just like a great city, ought to have a military arm. Still, he would never practise in company, and no one ever heard him speak: a friend once said to him, 'Cato, they are criticizing the way you are silent.' 'That is fine, provided they do not criticize the way I live,' he replied; 'I shall begin to speak as soon as I have something to say.'

5. The tribunes were accustomed to conduct their business in the so-

called 'Basilica Porcia', which had been built and dedicated by the elder Cato as censor.²² There was a pillar there which they thought obscured their seats, and so they decided to take it down or move it. It was this that first brought Cato into the forum, against his will, for he opposed the proposal, and won admiration for the impression he left both of his rhetoric and of his mental stature. There was nothing immature or fancy about his speaking style, but it was correct, emotional and hard-hitting.²³ There was not just force of argument but also a stylistic charm that made one listen; he gave glimpses of his personality, too, which added a certain attractiveness, together with some urbane touches of humour to temper the solemnity of tone. He had a loud voice, one that the whole crowd could hear, and it had power, resilience and stamina: indeed, he would often speak all day without respite.²⁴ On that occasion, then, he won his case – and promptly resumed his silence and went back to his practising.

He trained his body too with physical exercises, training himself to put up with heat and snow with uncovered head and to walk in the streets at all hours rather than taking a carriage. When his friends accompanied him on his travels they would ride on horseback, and Cato would frequently engage in conversation with each in turn, as they rode and he walked at their side.²⁵ When he was sick, too, he showed extraordinary patience and endurance: if he had a fever, he would keep to himself without seeing anyone until he was sure that he was better and the illness had passed.

6. When he was dining, he would throw dice to see who got which portion; if he lost and his friends still asked him to pick first, he would say that it was not right to do that if Aphrodite did not wish it.²⁶ At first he would just take a single drink after dinner and then leave, but as time went on he took to drinking more heavily, so that he would often drink through till dawn. His friends explained this in terms of politics and affairs of state: those consumed all Cato's time during the day, they said, and he had no time for learned conversation, but at night he could talk to philosophers over the wine.²⁷ That was why, when a certain Memmius²⁸ said in a public gathering that Cato was usually drunk all night, Cicero retorted, 'Why not add that he plays dice all day?'

It was generally true that, as a matter of principle, Cato would follow the opposite path from the usual lifestyle and habits of his day, thinking that those were despicable and that a thorough reform was needed. He saw that it was fashionable to wear a stark, vividly red type of purple,²⁹ and so he would wear a darker shade. He would often go into public after breakfast without shoes or tunic;³⁰ it was not that he was seeking celebrity by being so unconventional, but rather

that he was training himself to feel shame only at what was truly shameful and to treat with indifference any other sort of disrepute. Once he was left a legacy of 100 talents³¹ by another Cato who was his cousin; he changed it into cash, and lent it out without interest to any of his friends who wanted it. There were even some who pledged to the treasury estates and slaves that he had offered them, and he made good his promise.

7. When he decided he was old enough to marry³² (and he had no previous sexual experience of women), he became engaged to Lepida;³³ she had previously been betrothed to Metellus Scipio,³⁴ but Scipio had broken off the engagement and the contract had been withdrawn, and so Lepida appeared to be free to marry Cato. Scipio, however, changed his mind again before the marriage: he moved heaven and earth to marry the girl, and did so. Cato was furious. He tried to take legal action, but his friends stepped in to stop that; so he turned to iambic poetry, angry young man as he was, and poured abuse on Scipio,³⁵ adopting the vitriolic tone of Archilochus without the adolescent obscenities.³⁶ Instead of Lepida he married Atilia,³⁷ daughter of Serranus, and this was the first woman with whom he had sex: the first, but not the last, so here he differed from Scipio's friend Laelius.³⁸ Laelius was the more fortunate of the two, to have just the single partner, the woman he originally married, in the many different stages of his life.³⁹

8. Then came the slave war – the 'Spartacus War', as they called it.⁴⁰ Gellius held the command,⁴¹ and Cato took part as a volunteer for his brother's sake, for Caepio was serving as a military tribune. Cato did not have as much opportunity as he hoped to show his enthusiasm and his good training in valour, because the war was so poorly handled. But still his discipline, bravery, intelligence and courage in every circumstance contrasted with the general slackness and loose living of the others on campaign, so much so that he gave the impression of living up to the standards of the elder Cato. Gellius proposed certain decorations and marks of honour, but Cato refused them, saying that he had done nothing worthy of such recognition.

This brought him the reputation of being difficult to deal with. That was compounded by what happened when a bill was passed forbidding candidates from having *nomenclatores*.⁴² Cato was standing for a military tribunate and was the only person to keep within the terms of the law, making it his own business to greet and to address the people he met. This was not particularly popular even with those who expressed their admiration: the more they acknowledged the virtue of his practice, the more they resented how difficult it would be to follow his example.

9. He was duly elected military tribune,⁴³ and was sent to Macedonia to serve under the command of Rubrius.⁴⁴ As he was about to leave, his wife (so the story goes) was upset and crying. 'Don't worry, Atilia,' said Munatius,⁴⁵ one of his friends; 'I'll take care of him for you.' 'He certainly will,' added Cato. After the first day's travelling, Cato said straight after dinner, 'Come then, Munatius: I want you to make good your promise to Atilia, and stay by me night and day.' He then gave instructions for their two beds to be put in the same room, and told Munatius that this should always be their sleeping arrangement, so that Cato could 'take care of him', as they playfully put it.

Cato's entourage comprised fifteen slaves, two freedmen and four friends. They would ride on horseback while he would always walk, talking to each in turn.⁴⁶ When he arrived at camp, there were several legions there, and the general put him in command of one. His response was to regard it as a trivial and commonplace matter to make a display of his own virtue, as that concerned only a single individual; his aspiration was rather to make the men under his command as similar to himself as possible. His position of authority was such as to inspire fear, and he did nothing to diminish that; but he did complement it with persuasion, and he gave his men justifications and explanations for each of his orders,⁴⁷ then backed these up with rewards and punishments. It was hard to say whether he turned his troops more into men of peace or into men of war, or injected more enthusiasm or sense of justice: that is how intimidating they became to their enemies and gentle to their allies, without the heart to do anything wrong but full of ambition to win praise. And the thing that Cato least cared about was what he most gained:⁴⁸ reputation, gratitude, immense honour and affection from his own men. For anything he asked of others he would willingly do himself, and he was closer to them in the way he dressed, lived and marched than he was to those in command – but in character, mental stature and reasoning power he outdid all those who carried the title of commander and general. This meant that, without realizing it, he also inspired his men with goodwill towards him. For there cannot be a genuine desire to imitate virtue without the utmost honour and goodwill towards the person setting the example; those who praise good people without affection are showing respect for the fame they have won, but they feel no real admiration for their good qualities and do not imitate them.

10. While on campaign he heard that Athenodorus Cordylion,⁴⁹ a particularly eminent student of Stoicism, was living at Pergamum. He was an old man by now, and Cato knew that he had always set his face against friendships with kings and people of power, so he thought

that sending messengers and letters would achieve nothing. But he did have an entitlement of two months' leave, and so he sailed to Asia to meet the man, confident enough in his own merits to believe that he would get his prey. They duly met, and Cato won him over and persuaded him to change his view. Then he brought him back to the camp, overjoyed and full of pride: Pompey and Lucullus might go round in arms and conquer all those nations and kingdoms,⁵⁰ but Cato was convinced that he had captured something more glorious and more splendid still.⁵¹

11. While Cato was still on campaign, his brother Caepio fell sick at Aenus, a town in Thrace,⁵² while travelling to Asia. A letter immediately reached Cato with the news. But the weather was very stormy and no ship big enough for the voyage was available, so Cato embarked on a little merchant vessel with just two friends and three slaves, and set sail from Thessalonica. There was a real danger of shipwreck, but somehow or other he arrived safely, only to find that Caepio had just died.⁵³ His response struck people as more emotional than philosophical, not just in his lamentation and his embracings of the body and the depth of his grief, but also in the expenditure and the lavish arrangements for the funeral, with expensive spices and clothing burned on the pyre, and a statue in Thasian marble erected in the market-place at Aenus at a cost of 8 talents.⁵⁴ The contrast between this and Cato's general austerity gave rise to some criticism, but only from people who failed to realize what a depth of gentle, loving feeling lay behind the man's hard and unbending attitude towards pleasures and fears and inappropriate requests. On this occasion cities and rulers sent many gifts to honour the dead man: Cato refused all gifts of money, but accepted the spices and clothing, though he insisted on paying the donors for them. Nor did he claim any of the funeral expense when the estate was divided between himself and Caepio's young daughter,⁵⁵ who were the two heirs. Yet after acting and suffering like this, someone⁵⁶ was so outrageous as to claim that Cato sifted and filtered his brother's ashes looking for melted gold among the remains of the fire. The man who said that did not have to fear any consequences or any cross-examination, and this amounted to exploiting that confidence with the pen, not just the sword.

12. When Cato was due to return home, he was seen off not just with prayers for his safety – those are common enough – and speeches of praise, but also with tears and embrace after embrace. People would throw down their cloaks for him to walk over, and kiss his hands: in those days the Romans were very sparing in honouring their generals in this way.

Before entering public life he wanted to travel more, for a mix of reasons. One was his desire to see the historic sights of Asia and find out what sort of customs and lifestyle and resources were to be found in each province; another was his wish not to disappoint Deiotarus of Galatia,⁵⁷ who was an ancestral guest-friend of the family and was pressing him to come on a visit. He made his tour in the following way. Every morning he would send ahead his baker and his cook to the place where he was planning to stay the next night. They would enter the city in a quiet, restrained way, and if Cato did not happen to have a family friend or acquaintance there they would book him into a local inn; if there was no inn, then they would turn to the town's magistrates and ask for hospitality, content to accept whatever was offered. It often happened that their lack of fuss and threats made people disbelieve them and turn them down, so that Cato would arrive to find that they had not made any arrangements. The sight of Cato himself would then make people even more dismissive: as he sat quietly on his piled-up baggage, he would give the impression of someone who was altogether humble and timid. Still, he would go so far as to call the magistrates to him and say, 'You scoundrels! You really should change your inhospitable ways. Not everyone who comes your way will be a Cato. Be welcoming, and that will take the edge off their power. They will be looking for an excuse to take from you by force, claiming that you did not give willingly.'

13. There is a story too about a funny thing that happened in Syria.⁵⁸ Cato was just about to enter Antioch on foot, and at the gates he saw a vast crowd of people lining the road: on one side were young men wearing cloaks, on the other children standing in neat rows. There were some people too wearing pure white clothes and crowns on their heads: these were magistrates or priests of the gods. Cato assumed that this must be a mark of honour and welcome to him on the city's behalf, and was annoyed with those attendants whom he had sent ahead; they should have stopped this, he thought. He told his friends to dismount, and went forward on foot with them. As they approached, the person came up who was in charge of the arrangements and who had told the crowd where to stand. He was an elderly man, carrying a staff and a crown in his hand, and did not even offer a greeting to Cato, who was walking ahead of the others. 'Where have you left Demetrius?' he asked instead. 'When will he be here?' This Demetrius had once been a slave of Pompey.⁵⁹ At this time everybody was looking to Pompey, and so Demetrius, who was known to have immense influence with him, was courted much more than he should have been. This made Cato's companions laugh uncontrollably as they walked on through the crowd, but Cato himself turned round

and exclaimed, with some force, 'What an ill-starred city!'⁶⁰ That was all he said, but later he too would laugh when he remembered the incident and told the tale.

14. It was Pompey's own behaviour that made the provincials regret that they had been so rude to Cato through ignorance. For Cato paid a visit to him at Ephesus, and was advancing to greet him with the respect due to a man who was older, much more distinguished and commanding a vastly powerful army. Pompey saw him coming, and immediately leapt to his feet rather than receiving him while seated; instead he went to meet him as he would a superior, and gave him his hand. He delivered speech after speech in Cato's praise, many straight away as he greeted him warmly and welcomed him, and even more when Cato had left. This made everyone regret the way they had treated Cato and start paying him attention, admiring the very features that had previously led them to be so dismissive, and to reflect admiringly on his unoppressive and magnanimous behaviour. But it was also clear that Pompey was so attentive because he thought Cato worth cultivating, and this was not a mark of true affection: people noticed that he respected Cato while he was there and was relieved when he went away. For when other young men visited him, Pompey would be eager to keep them in his company and wanted them to spend time with him – but not Cato. It was as if he felt his command was under constant review while Cato was present, and so he was glad to see him go. Yet Cato was almost the only traveller to Rome to whom he entrusted his wife and children for protection on the journey⁶¹ (true, they were related to him as well).⁶² This led to many marks of honour and elaborate welcomes and competitiveness among the cities in fêting him with banquets and invitations, so much so that he asked his companions to warn him if ever he showed signs of proving Curio⁶³ right. For Curio, irritated by the austere behaviour of his close friend Cato, had asked him if he wanted to see the sights of Asia after his military service. 'I certainly do,' said Cato. 'Good!' retorted Curio. 'When you come back you'll be a more agreeable companion and a less savage spirit.' (That, pretty well, is the sense of the word he used.⁶⁴)

15. At one point Deiotarus of Galatia⁶⁵ sent for Cato; he was an old man by now, and he wished to place his children and his household under Cato's care. When Cato arrived, Deiotarus showered him with gifts of all sorts and tried every way he knew to make him accede to his requests, but this so irritated Cato that, after arriving in the evening, he spent just a single night there, and left mid-morning the next day. Still, when he reached Pessinus⁶⁶ that same night he discovered an even greater number of gifts waiting for him and a

letter from Deiotarus begging him, if he did not want to take anything for himself, at least to allow his friends to do so: they deserved it, for his sake, and Cato's own wealth was not on the same scale. Cato still refused, even though he could see that some of his friends were weakening and were secretly critical of him. 'Every piece of bribery can easily find a good excuse,' he said; 'my friends will get their share of anything I gain honestly and justly.' And he sent the gifts back to Deiotarus.

When he was about to set sail for Brundisium, his friends suggested that he should put Caepio's ashes on board another boat, but Cato replied that he would sooner let go of his own life than of those ashes, and put to sea. It so happened that he had a particularly perilous voyage, so they say, when everyone else had a fairly easy one.

16. Once back in Rome, he spent most of his time at home with Athenodorus⁶⁷ or lending support to his friends in the forum. But then it was time for him to stand for the quaestorship.⁶⁸ He would not allow his candidature to go forward until he had studied the regulations surrounding the office, and cross-examined experts on each point, and grasped a full outline of a quaestor's powers. As a result, immediately he entered office he had a vast impact on the quaestors' attendants and scribes. These men had the public records and laws at their fingertips, and were used to dealing with young men whose ignorance and lack of experience meant that they needed others to be their teachers and tutors; so the officials were the ones who kept the real power, and behaved as if they were the magistrates themselves. Cato changed all that: he took a vigorous grip of affairs, and held not just the name and honour of an office-holder but also the required intelligence and mental stature and powers of reasoning. So he treated the scribes as the servants they were, exposing their deliberate malpractices and correcting the mistakes that they were making through ignorance. This injected the energy into the officials to pay court to the other quaestors while waging open war with Cato. So on his own authority he found one of them guilty of dishonesty in an inheritance suit and expelled him from the treasury; then he brought a suit against a second official for embezzlement. This second man was supported by Lutatius Catulus the censor, a man who had great prestige from his office and even greater from his reputation, as he was thought to be outstanding among the Romans in his sense of justice and his moral insight.⁶⁹ He was also a friend of Cato and an admirer of the way he lived. It became clear that the balance of the case lay against the accused, and despite this Catulus was frankly trying to beg him off. Cato would have nothing of this, but Catulus persisted. 'Catulus,' said Cato, 'it would be a dreadful thing if you, a

censor, the man whose duty it is to scrutinize our lives, have to be thrown out of court by our attendants.’ After Cato had said this Catulus looked at him as if he were about to reply, but said nothing and just went away in silent perplexity, perhaps too angry to speak, perhaps too ashamed. Yet the man was not convicted, for the following reason. There was one more vote for conviction than for acquittal, but then Catulus sent to Marcus Lollius,⁷⁰ a fellow-magistrate of Cato who had been too ill to come to the trial, and begged him to come to the man’s assistance. Lollius arrived in a litter and cast the vote that acquitted him. Even so, Cato would not employ the scribe or pay his salary, and refused to regard Lollius’s vote as carrying any validity.

17. That won him his battle with the scribes and made it clear who was in control. As a result he could manage matters as he wished, and he soon made the treasury a more respected place than the senate-house, so that everyone said and thought that Cato had brought to the quaestorship the dignity of the consulship. He first discovered that there were many long-standing debts owed either to or by the treasury, and so he stopped these injustices that the city was both suffering and committing, demanding with uncompromising vigour what was due and paying speedily and readily what was owed. The people were delighted, seeing some people paying up what they had hoped to get away with and others getting back what they had never expected to receive. It had also become the practice for people to file spurious records and for the previous quaestors to register false decisions in favour of their friends’ requests. Nothing of this sort got past Cato: on one occasion, indeed, he was in doubt whether a decree had actually been passed, and even though many people were attesting its validity he would not believe them or authenticate it before the consuls came and gave sworn evidence. There were many people too who had committed killings during the proscriptions and had been rewarded by Sulla with gifts of 12,000 drachmas.⁷¹ Everyone regarded them as polluted villains, but no one would take them on. Cato summoned them one by one, accused them of holding public money and made them pay it back; in speeches full of both passion and logic he reviled them for the impiety and lawlessness of what they had done. Once this had happened they were immediately liable to charges of murder, and, just as if they had already been condemned in advance, they were hauled before the courts and punished.⁷² That brought pleasure to everyone. It was as if the tyranny of those days was finally being wiped out, and they could see Sulla himself paying the penalty for his crimes.

18. The people were also impressed by Cato’s diligence and

conscientiousness. He was always the first quaestor to arrive at the treasury and the last to leave. He never missed an assembly or a meeting of the senate, for he was always alert to the danger that there would be people willing to vote through remissions of debts and tax-concessions and gifts to any of their friends. He was soon able to show off a treasury that never saw a dishonest informer but was always full of money: the lesson was clear, that it was possible for a city to be both wealthy and honest. At the beginning he appeared harsh and offensive to some of his colleagues, but as time went on they came to like him, for he was the one who drew any bad feeling that was incurred by the refusal to apply favouritism at the state's expense or to try cases dishonestly. They could always say to those who were forcing their demands on them that 'it's not possible: Cato will say no'.

His final day in office arrived, and virtually the entire citizen-body was escorting him on his way home. But then he heard that his colleague Marcellus⁷³ had been surrounded in the treasury by a crowd of powerful acquaintances, and they were pressing him to make a grant of money that was not justified. This Marcellus had been Cato's childhood friend and was an exemplary magistrate when the two were acting together, but when left to himself he was easily led by a feeling of deference towards petitioners and was prone to grant any favour. Cato immediately turned back, and when he arrived he found that Marcellus had yielded to the pressure and signed the grant. So Cato demanded the tablets and erased them, while Marcellus stood by and said nothing. When he had done this, Cato led him from the treasury and took him home. Marcellus never criticized him for this either at the time or subsequently, and their friendship survived intact to the end.

Even when Cato had finished his term of office, he did not abandon his watch on the treasury, but his slaves were there every day taking a record of the decisions that were made. He himself bought for 5 talents⁷⁴ a set of accounts of all public business between the time of Sulla and his own quaestorship, and he always had these with him.

19. He was the first to arrive at the senate, too, and the last to depart.⁷⁵ It would often happen that he would sit there reading, hiding his book in his toga, while the others gradually gathered. He would never leave the city when there was a senate-meeting. Later the friends of Pompey, when they saw that it was impossible to get him either through persuasion or intimidation to agree to any of their disreputable schemes, would try to keep him outside the senate by setting up some speech to be given for a friend or arbitration or business matter. Cato swiftly saw what they were trying to do, and refused every request and made it a matter of principle to have no

other business while the senate was in session. For he was not one of those who enter public life for honour or profit or by chance or simply as a matter of course: he chose politics as the appropriate sphere of action for a man of virtue,⁷⁶ and thought that one should be more devoted to public affairs than the bee is to the honey. He even made it his business to have the most important provincial affairs and decisions and judgements reported to him by whatever guest-friends and acquaintances he had in each country.

There was once an occasion where he confronted Clodius the demagogue,⁷⁷ an agitator who was laying the grounds for a big revolutionary programme. Clodius was launching an attack before the people on various priests and priestesses, including Fabia, the sister of Cicero's wife Terentia, and Fabia was in danger of conviction.⁷⁸ Cato managed to shame Clodius so much that he was forced to leave the city; then, when Cicero thanked him, he told him he should be grateful to the state, for it was for the state's good that he did everything and directed his political life. He was greatly admired for this. In fact, an orator once said to the jury, in a case where there was only one witness, that 'you should never trust a single witness, even if it was Cato himself'; and when something extraordinary happened people would often say, in proverbial mode, that 'I couldn't believe that, not even if Cato said it!'. Once too a man of loose morals and wild expenditure was giving a speech in the senate in praise of austerity and restraint, and Amnaeus⁷⁹ got up and said, 'Look, who's going to put up with this – you dine like Crassus, build like Lucullus and speak to us like Cato!' Others too who lived low but talked high were mockingly known as 'Catos'.⁸⁰

20. Many people pressed him to stand for the tribunate of the plebs,⁸¹ but his own view was that the office was like a powerful drug, one whose immense powers and authority should not be wasted on trivial matters. Public affairs happened to be in a time of recess, and so he took his books and his philosophers and set out to Lucania, where he owned an estate where it was possible to spend a very civilized retreat. On his way, though, he met a crowd of animals with their baggage and attendants, and gathered that Metellus Nepos⁸² was returning to Rome to stand for the tribunate. Cato stood for a moment in silence, then after a short interval gave instructions for his own party to turn back. His friends were bemused: 'Do you not realize', he told them, 'that Metellus is quite enough of a hothead on his own to be dangerous, and now that he has Pompey's backing he will hit the state like a thunderbolt, creating havoc everywhere? This is no time for a retreat or a journey, but I must defeat the man, or else die honourably in the fight for freedom.' Still, he was persuaded by his

friends to visit his estate first and spend a short time there, then he returned to the city. He arrived in the evening, and first thing the next morning went down to the forum and announced his candidature for the tribunate, preparing to stand as Metellus's opponent. The office's power lies in its capacity to hinder rather than initiate action, and even if all except one tribune vote for a measure, the one who is opposed and casts a veto carries the day.⁸³

21. At first Cato was attended by only a few friends, but when his intention became clear all the people of quality and good family swiftly congregated and urged him on. 'It is not that we are doing you a favour,' they said, 'it is you that is granting the biggest favour of all to your country and to the best of its citizens; you have often had the chance to hold office in a period of calm, but now you are standing to fight and to face danger in the cause of liberty.' So many enthusiastic supporters were pushing their way to his side, they say, that it was quite dangerous, and the crowd was such that he only just managed to make his way to the forum.

He was one of the tribunes elected – and so was Metellus. Now the consular elections were at hand,⁸⁴ and Cato could see how corrupt they were. He delivered a speech of rebuke to the people, and at its conclusion he swore an oath that he would prosecute any candidate who offered a bribe, whoever it might be; the only exception he made was Silanus,⁸⁵ because of their family connection, for Silanus was married to Cato's sister Servilia.⁸⁶ For that reason he left Silanus alone, but he did prosecute Lucius Murena,⁸⁷ who had managed through bribery to be elected consul along with Silanus. There was a law that allowed a defendant to nominate a person to shadow the prosecutor, so that it would be clear what evidence was being collected and what preparations were being made for the trial. The attendant that Murena nominated for Cato initially kept a constant watch on what he was doing, but then he noticed that Cato's preparations involved nothing insidious or dishonest but were in keeping with the totally straightforward and proper path that Cato, in his noble and decent way, was planning to take in his prosecution. The attendant was so struck by his mental stature and his character that he would go down to the forum, call at Cato's door and ask if he was planning to do anything today that concerned the prosecution. If Cato said no, he would believe him and go away.

When the case came to court,⁸⁸ Cicero, who was consul at the time and spoke for Murena, spent a lot of time trying to discredit Cato by making fun of Stoic philosophers and the so-called 'Stoic paradoxes'.⁸⁹ The jurors were laughing,⁹⁰ and Cato said, with a smile to those around him, 'Well, my friends, what a comic consul we have!'⁹¹

Murena was acquitted, and subsequently behaved in a most honourable and sensible way towards Cato; during his consulship he would consult him on the most important matters, and continued to treat him with total respect and confidence.⁹² And Cato himself takes the credit for this, for he would be a fierce and remitting advocate of justice on the tribunal and in the senate, but would afterwards behave towards everyone with goodwill and decency.

22. Before his tribunate began,⁹³ there were all the struggles that surrounded Cicero's term as consul. Cato often played a large part in supporting him, and in particular was responsible for the conclusion of the Catiline affair, great and glorious achievement as that was. Catiline himself had been stirring up civil faction and open war; in fact his aim was to start a total, catastrophic Roman revolution. By now he had been exposed by Cicero and had left the city,⁹⁴ but Lentulus, Cethegus and many others had carried on the conspiracy.⁹⁵ In their eyes Catiline had shown himself a pusillanimous coward; their own plan was to burn down the entire city, and to stir up national rebellions and foreign wars that would bring the empire to its knees. Their plotting too was discovered, as I have related in the *Cicero*,⁹⁶ and the senate debated what to do.⁹⁷ Silanus⁹⁸ was first to speak, and he expressed the opinion that the men should suffer the ultimate punishment. Every speaker who followed took the same view, until it came to the turn of Caesar. He was a powerful speaker; he was also concerned to encourage any destabilizing movement in the state rather than damp it down, thinking that this might provide the raw material for his own later plans. So he got up and delivered a speech full of specious arguments and liberal sentiment: he said it was wrong to execute the men without trial, and proposed imprisonment instead.⁹⁹ Caesar's speech so changed the mood of the senate (they were nervous of the people) that even Silanus denied the implications of what he had already said, and claimed that he too had not meant death but imprisonment: that, he said, was the 'ultimate' suffering for a Roman citizen.

23. It seemed to be a total reversal, and everyone was rushing to take the more lenient and liberal course.¹⁰⁰ But then Cato rose to his feet.¹⁰¹ He launched a violent and passionate attack on the proposal, reproaching Silanus for his change of mind and delivering a bitter invective against Caesar: for all his popular gesturing and liberal words, he was undermining the city and trying to intimidate the senate when he should be the one to be fearful; it should be enough for him if he escaped unpunished and unsuspected for his past activities¹⁰² – and now he was blatantly and vigorously trying to snatch the state's enemies from their fate! It was tantamount to

acknowledging that he felt no pity at all for his country, so great and so fine and so close to destruction, but instead was weeping for these people who should never have been born at all, and lamenting the prospect that they might free the city from immense fears and dangers by their death. This is said to be the only speech of Cato's that still survives. (This was because Cicero as consul selected some scribes who wrote with great speed and instructed them in some short-hand symbols that enabled them to take down a great deal with just a few short strokes, and then he distributed them around the senate-house.¹⁰³ For stenography did not yet exist: these, they say, were its first tentative steps.) So Cato carried the day and changed the senators' minds, so that they sentenced the men to death.

24. Perhaps I should include even tiny indications of characters, as if I were sketching an image of the soul.¹⁰⁴ The story goes as follows. It was at the point when the struggle of Cato and Caesar was at its most confrontational and intense, and the whole senate was held gripped; then a small writing tablet was brought in and given to Caesar. Cato grabbed this opportunity to suggest that Caesar must be involved in the conspiracy: 'Who are these people who are in communication with you? Read out what it says!' Caesar passed the tablet over to Cato, standing only a few feet away. Cato read it: it was a love-letter from his sister Servilia,¹⁰⁵ who was conducting a passionate affair with Caesar. Cato hurled it back at Caesar, crying, 'Take it, you drunken oaf!' and resumed his speech.

It does indeed seem that Cato was very unfortunate in his womenfolk. This sister's reputation was scarred by the affair with Caesar; no less scandal attached to the other Servilia, Cato's sister.¹⁰⁶ She was married to Lucullus, a man whose reputation among the Romans was second to none, and bore his child, but then was thrown out of the house because of her immoral behaviour.¹⁰⁷ Worst of all, Cato's own wife Atilia¹⁰⁸ was not devoid of similar peccadillos, and despite the two children¹⁰⁹ she had borne him he was forced to throw her out for her bad behaviour.

25. Then he married Marcia, the daughter of Philippus,¹¹⁰ a woman whose morals seemed unimpeachable – yet in fact this is the woman about whom there is most debate: this is the part of his life that, rather as in a drama,¹¹¹ poses the most serious and difficult questions. It happened like this. (Here I am following Thræsea,¹¹² who cites as his authority Munatius,¹¹³ Cato's friend and close companion.) There were many who were passionate admirers of Cato, and some were more in the public eye and distinguished than this Munatius. These included Quintus Hortensius, a man of good character and high reputation.¹¹⁴ Hortensius desired to become something more than a friend and

comrade of Cato, and wanted to find some way of linking his whole household and family in partnership; so he tried to persuade Cato to give him in marriage Cato's daughter Porcia,¹¹⁵ even though she was married already to Bibulus¹¹⁶ and the couple had two children. Hortensius suggested that Cato should hand her over to himself: she would provide him with a noble field for bearing a new crop of children. Such things, said Hortensius, might seem strange if measured by the gauge of human opinion, but in terms of nature this would be fine and public-spirited: when a woman was at her peak, it was not right for her to abandon her child-bearing capacity and leave it inactive, but it was wrong too for her to bear more children than a marriage needed and impoverish a house unnecessarily. If the right men mingled their descendants together, that would make virtue flourish in more abundance and profusion in their families, and would cement the city itself more closely together with such family links. If Bibulus was really attached to the woman, then he would give her back straight after she had given birth, and he himself would then be all the closer to Bibulus and Cato because of the children they would share. Cato's reply was that he was an admirer of Hortensius and felt that he was a very worthy person for a marriage-link, but he thought it strange to discuss marrying his daughter when she already had a husband. Hortensius therefore changed tack and without further ado asked Cato for his own wife: she was still young enough to bear children, while Cato himself had enough children already.¹¹⁷ It is uncertain whether Hortensius made this suggestion in the knowledge that Cato was not at the time having a close relationship with Marcia, for (so they say) she was pregnant. On seeing Hortensius's enthusiasm for the suggestion Cato made no objection, but he did say that Marcia's father Philippus would have to give his approval as well. When Philippus was approached, he agreed to the arrangement, but insisted that he would only betroth his daughter if Cato himself were there too and acted as co-betrother.

All this happened later,¹¹⁸ but as I had mentioned the women of Cato's family it seemed sensible to include it here.

26. So Lentulus and his associates were executed. Caesar's response to the accusations and attacks on him in the senate was to turn to the people for support: there were many parts of the state that were sick and corrupt, and Caesar stirred these up and concentrated their support on himself. This alarmed Cato, and he persuaded the senate to extend the corn-dole to the mass of the population that were destitute but had hitherto been ineligible.¹¹⁹ The measure cost 1,250 talents a year,¹²⁰ but the gesture of generosity and goodwill was remarkably successful in defusing the danger.

Then Metellus¹²¹ launched himself into¹²² his tribunate, and began to hold agitational assembly-meetings. He proposed a law to recall Pompey the Great to Italy with all speed,¹²³ entrusting him with the city and calling upon him to save it from the dangers posed by Catiline.¹²⁴ The argument was a specious one, but the effect of the law would eventually be to give Pompey control of everything and make him master of the empire.¹²⁵ When the senate convened,¹²⁶ Cato did not launch into his usual vehement attack on Metellus, but instead delivered a speech full of reasonable and moderate advice, and ended by adopting a pleading tone and praising the house of the Metelli for its continual record of aristocratic politics. This simply encouraged Metellus and made him even more contemptuous, as it gave him the impression that Cato was flinching before him and giving in; so he launched into arrogant threats and violent language, saying that he would carry everything even if the senate opposed it. At this Cato changed his manner, his voice, and his tone, and at the end of his speech he said with great emphasis, 'As long as I am alive Pompey will never enter the city in arms.' The feeling of the senate was that neither man's line was a sane or safe one, but Metellus's policy was sheer madness which would lead to total disaster and collapse amid an excess of cowardice and devilry, while Cato's was a fanatical version of a virtue that fought for justice and for good.

27. When the people were about to vote on the bill, Metellus was flanked by arms and mercenaries and gladiators and slaves in formation as he went down to the forum; there were also a fair number of the ordinary people who wanted to see Pompey return because they hoped for a revolution. Caesar too, who was then praetor, added to their strength. Cato, on the other hand, was supported by the foremost of the citizens, who shared his indignation; but they were more fellow-victims than fellow-actors, and his house was full of depression and apprehension. Indeed, some of his friends stayed up there together all night without eating, at a loss to know what course of action Cato should pursue; his wife¹²⁷ and sisters¹²⁸ were there too, crying out and weeping. But Cato spoke to everyone in unperturbed and confident terms, and encouraged them to be hopeful;¹²⁹ he dined as usual and went to bed, then the next morning was sleeping deeply when he was woken by one of his fellow-magistrates, Minucius Thermus.¹³⁰ They went down to the forum, with few people accompanying them but many coming in the opposite direction and warning them to be careful. When Cato arrived, he stopped on seeing the Temple of Castor and Pollux¹³¹ surrounded by arms, its steps guarded by gladiators, and Metellus sitting at the top of the stairs together with Caesar. At this Cato turned to his friends and

said, 'What presumption – and what cowardice, to collect so many soldiers to fight against one man, unprotected and unarmed!' And he walked straight on with Thermus. Those occupying the steps made way to let them through, but would let no one else pass – though Cato just managed to drag Munatius¹³² up with him by grabbing his hand. When he reached the top he sat straight down, planting himself between Metellus and Caesar in such a way as to stop their conniving. Metellus and Caesar were at a loss, while the better element looked on with admiration for the facial expression and the mental stature and the courage of Cato: they pressed forward and shouted out, encouraging Cato to be resolute and themselves to keep together, stand their ground and not forsake their liberty or its champion.

28. Then the clerk brought out the bill. Cato stopped him from reading it, so Metellus grabbed it and began to read; Cato snatched the document from him, but Metellus knew the wording by heart and carried on reciting it, and so Thermus put his hand over Metellus's mouth and stopped him from speaking.¹³³ This went on until Metellus realized that he had no way of winning this struggle, and also saw that the people were beginning to change their view and were deciding that practicality favoured Cato. At this Metellus summoned heavily armed men to charge in with terrifying cries to intimidate the opposition. Everyone else fled, but Cato alone stood firm, even though he was being pelted from above by sticks and stones. Now Murena, the man he had unsuccessfully prosecuted and denounced,¹³⁴ came to his rescue, held out his toga to cover him from view, and shouted out to those who were hurling missiles to tell them to stop. Finally he managed to prevail upon Cato himself, put his arms around him, and led him away into the Temple of Castor and Pollux.

The tribunal now seemed deserted, and all the bill's opponents appeared to have fled through the forum. This gave Metellus the impression that he had carried the day, and so he instructed the armed men to leave, moved forward himself in a calm manner and began to transact the procedures necessary to carry the bill. But the opposition quickly regrouped after their flight, and advanced again on Metellus with a loud, resolute cry. Metellus and his cronies were confused and alarmed, thinking that the others were attacking them with arms that they had got from somewhere, and every one of them took to his heels and fled from the tribunal. Now that they had dispersed, Cato came forward and gave a speech of praise and encouragement to the populace: the result was that the ordinary people took his side and committed themselves to do whatever was necessary to bring Metellus down, and the senate met and gave instructions to do everything possible to help Cato and fight against

the bill, on the grounds that it was embroiling Rome in faction and civil war.

29. Metellus himself had kept his nerve, but he could see that all his supporters were totally in awe of Cato and viewing him as an opponent that they just could not defeat by force. So he suddenly leapt out into the forum, collected the ordinary people together and delivered an invective against Cato. It was full of offensive remarks, including a call on the people to escape from 'Cato's tyranny' and 'the conspiracy against Pompey'; the city, he said, would soon regret dishonouring a man as great as that. At this he left immediately for Asia to deliver his accusations to Pompey.¹³⁵

Cato's star was now in the ascendant. It was as if he had unloaded a heavy weight from the tribunate – indeed, as if he had in a way destroyed Pompey's power in Metellus's person. He enhanced his reputation still further by stopping the senate from voting to dishonour Metellus formally and remove him from office;¹³⁶ he opposed that proposal and persuaded them to drop it. The ordinary people took this as a sign of humane feeling and moderation in his refusal to humiliate his enemy and to carry on hostilities when he had already won; more discriminating critics thought it was a correct and prudential step, so as to avoid provoking Pompey.

Then Lucullus, now returned from the campaign where Pompey seemed to have robbed him of the conclusion and the glory, was in danger of being denied a triumph;¹³⁷ Gaius Memmius was winning the political fight against him before the people, and bringing accusations more to ingratiate himself with Pompey than because of any private animosity. Cato was Lucullus's relative (Lucullus was married to his sister Servilia¹³⁸), and anyway he thought the whole thing outrageous; so he stood up to Memmius, and had himself to put up with a flood of slanders and accusations. Finally, there was a proposal to expel him from his office on the grounds that he had turned it into a tyranny;¹³⁹ but Cato won so decisive a victory that Memmius was himself forced to abandon his law-suits and retire from the contest. So Lucullus celebrated his triumph, and this cemented his friendship with Cato still more, as Cato offered him a strong bulwark and defence against the power of Pompey.

30. Next came Pompey's own return¹⁴⁰ from his campaign. His successes had made him a great man,¹⁴¹ and the splendour and enthusiasm of his welcome encouraged him to believe that the citizens would grant him whatever he wanted; so he sent asking the senate to delay the consular elections to enable him to be present in person to support the candidature of Piso.¹⁴² Most were inclined to allow the request, but Cato thought that the most important point was not the

delay itself but the opportunity to cause Pompey a setback and a disappointment, and so he opposed it and persuaded the senate to refuse.

Pompey was taken aback by this, and concluded that Cato was going to cause him considerable trouble unless they became friends; so he sent for Cato's friend Munatius, and made a proposal concerning two marriageable nieces of Cato.¹⁴³ He asked to marry the older one himself, and to allow the younger one to marry his son. (Some say that the request was not for Cato's nieces but for his daughters.¹⁴⁴) Munatius reported the offer to Cato, his wife and his sisters,¹⁴⁵ and the women were overjoyed by the suggestion, thinking of Pompey's greatness and reputation. But Cato was thunderstruck, and without a moment's delay or deliberation said straight away, 'Go, Munatius, go now, and tell Pompey that there is no way of capturing Cato by way of his women's quarters;¹⁴⁶ say that Cato welcomes the gesture of goodwill, and if Pompey behaves properly he will grant him a friendship that is more firmly based than any marriage-relationship – but that he will not give any hostages for the glory of Pompey that he could use against our country.'

The women were not at all pleased by this, and Cato's friends too criticized the reply as being rude and supercilious. A little later, though, Pompey was supporting the consular candidature of one of his friends¹⁴⁷ and distributed money among the tribes in such a way that the bribery became notorious: indeed, the money was being doled out in Pompey's own gardens. Cato remarked to the women that, had they joined in a marriage-alliance with Pompey, this was the sort of thing that they would have been party to, and would have shared in its abundant disgrace; the women then agreed that Cato had taken the better view in refusing. Still, if one judges decisions by their consequences, Cato would appear to have been totally wrong¹⁴⁸ in not accepting the alliance but allowing Pompey to turn to Caesar instead and make a marriage that united the power of the two men.¹⁴⁹ Within a few years that brought revolution and destroyed the constitution. And possibly nothing of that would have happened, if Cato had not been led by fear of Pompey's small misdemeanours to overlook the biggest danger of all, that he would add his own power to that of another.

31. All that was still in the future. There was now a political struggle between Lucullus and Pompey on the question of the settlement of Pontus, for both men argued for the validity of their own dispositions.¹⁵⁰ It was clear that Lucullus was suffering a serious injustice, and Cato came to his defence. Pompey was having the worse of the debate in the senate, and so he turned to demagoguery and

summoned the soldiers to Rome in order to get a distribution of land.¹⁵¹ Cato opposed this too and defeated the bill, and this drove Pompey into the arms of Clodius,¹⁵² at the time the most extreme of the demagogues, and into forming an alliance with Caesar.¹⁵³ In a way it was Cato himself who brought this about. For Caesar had just returned from governing Spain,¹⁵⁴ and wanted both to be a candidate for the consulship and to claim a triumph. The law prescribed that candidates for office had to be present in person,¹⁵⁵ but those who were to celebrate triumphs had to wait outside the walls,¹⁵⁶ and so Caesar requested permission from the senate to stand for the office in absence.¹⁵⁷ Many were willing to allow this, but Cato opposed it: when he saw that they were inclined to do what Caesar wanted, he talked out the day, and thus forced the senate to adjourn.¹⁵⁸ So Caesar abandoned the triumph, entered the city and immediately gave his attention to Pompey and to the consulship. Once elected consul,¹⁵⁹ he betrothed Julia to him,¹⁶⁰ and the two men stood united against the city. Caesar introduced laws granting colonies and a distribution of land to the poor,¹⁶¹ and Pompey was always there to give his support.¹⁶² Lucullus, Cicero and their followers lined up behind the other consul Bibulus¹⁶³ and did what they could to oppose; the most prominent was Cato, who already suspected that the friendship and alliance of Caesar and Pompey had been established for no good purpose.¹⁶⁴ 'What I am afraid of', he would say, 'is is not the land-distribution but the payback that will be demanded by those who are flattering and seducing the people.'

32. The senate were won over by what he said, and a fair number of non-senators took the same view and strongly disapproved of Caesar's outlandish behaviour. It was the sort of populist agitation one might expect from the most unrestrained and disrespectful of tribunes, and now it was backed up by the power of a consul, with Caesar disgracefully and shamefully playing for the favour of the masses. Alarmed by this opposition, Caesar's supporters resorted to violence. First of all they set upon Bibulus himself as he was coming down to the forum, and threw a basket of dung over him; then they attacked his lictors and broke their rods of office;¹⁶⁵ finally missiles were thrown and many were wounded,¹⁶⁶ so that the opponents of the legislation took flight from the forum. The rest were all running, but last of all went Cato, at walking pace, and turning round continually and calling the citizens to witness.

Not merely was the land-distribution agreed, there was also a clause requiring the whole senate to swear to observe it:¹⁶⁷ they had to undertake that they would back the law and oppose anyone who acted against it, and there were large penalties fixed for anyone who did not

swear. Everybody took the oath, as they had to, remembering what had happened long ago to Metellus, whom the people had allowed to be exiled from Italy when he refused to swear to a similar law.¹⁶⁸ For the same reason the women of Cato's family at home spent hours in tearful entreaties¹⁶⁹ to him to give in and swear, and his friends and followers took the same line. But the one who made most impression on Cato and persuaded him to take the oath was Cicero the orator. Cicero's advice took the form of telling him that perhaps it was not even justified to stand out alone in disobedience of what had been agreed by the community, and anyway it was wholly senseless and crazy to sacrifice himself when it was impossible to change anything that had happened.¹⁷⁰ Everything that Cato did (said Cicero) was for the sake of the city – and so the worst thing of all would be for him to abandon that city and surrender it to those who were plotting against it, as if he were content to be free of the struggle in her defence: even if Cato did not need Rome, Rome needed Cato, and so did all his friends. And the one friend (he continued) who needed him most was Cicero himself, now that he was the target of Clodius's plotting, with Clodius using his position as tribune to move openly against him.¹⁷¹ It was these arguments and pleas and others like them, delivered both at home and in the forum, that they say induced Cato to give in to the pressure and go to take the oath. He went last of all, it is said, except for Favonius,¹⁷² one of his friends and followers.

33. Caesar was encouraged by this success to introduce a second bill, which added to the distributions to the poor and destitute almost the whole of Campania.¹⁷³ No one uttered a word in opposition except Cato. This time Caesar dragged him from the tribunal and began to haul him off to prison:¹⁷⁴ even so Cato would not give up his freedom of speech, but as he walked he continued his harangue about the bill and urged his opponents to abandon policies of this sort. There followed, eyes downcast, the senate and the best elements among the people, silently indignant and outraged. Caesar himself could see that onlookers were not taking it well, but he stubbornly insisted on waiting for Cato to make some appeal and plea, and so he continued to lead him along. When it became clear that Cato was not going to do any such thing, Caesar finally gave in to a feeling of shame and disgrace, and he himself quietly told one of the tribunes to release him.

Those laws and favours were enough to make the people subservient, and they voted Caesar the command of Illyria and all Gaul, together with four legions,¹⁷⁵ for five years. Cato's comment was that this amounted to installing the tyrant in his citadel, and doing it by their own votes. Caesar and Pompey also illegally transferred

Publius Clodius from the patricians to the plebeians, and made him tribune:¹⁷⁶ Clodius's reward for doing all their bidding was to get Cicero exiled. The men they made consuls¹⁷⁷ were Piso, Caesar's father-in-law,¹⁷⁸ and Aulus Gabinius,¹⁷⁹ a bosom-friend of Pompey (at least, that is what is said by those who were familiar with his character and lifestyle).

34. Still, despite everything – their violent takeover of the state, and the way they dominated part of the city through graft and part through intimidation – nevertheless they were fearful of Cato. Even when they defeated him, it was painful and embarrassing that the victories were so difficult and laborious and disreputable, and so clearly involved the use of force. Clodius was convinced that he would not even be able to destroy Cicero if Cato were there,¹⁸⁰ and so he took measures to allow him to get his way. His first ploy, on entering office,¹⁸¹ was to invite Cato to come and talk to him. He regarded Cato, he said, as the most honest man at Rome, and was prepared to do something to demonstrate that confidence. There were many who were pressing for the commission of dealing with Cyprus and Ptolemy,¹⁸² and begging to be sent out to take care of it; but Clodius thought that Cato alone was worthy of the task, and he was happy to give him that favour. Cato immediately cried out this was not a favour at all but a trap and a humiliation: 'Well then,' Clodius replied arrogantly and contemptuously, 'if you don't regard it as a favour, you will just have to sail an unhappy man,' and he went straight to the people and passed a bill to send Cato on the mission.¹⁸³ He gave him no ship, no soldier, no staff for his journey, with the exception of just two secretaries, one of them a thief and a total villain, the other a client of Clodius himself. He added the task of restoring some exiles to Byzantium,¹⁸⁴ as if dealing with Cyprus and Ptolemy was a trivial matter. The aim was to keep Cato out of the way for as long as possible while Clodius himself was tribune.

35. Cato had no choice but to accept. He first advised Cicero, who was being driven into exile at the time, not to cause trouble nor to plunge the city into fighting and bloodshed, but instead to yield to circumstances, and return at some time in the future to become once again the saviour of his country.¹⁸⁵ Then he sent his friend Canidius¹⁸⁶ ahead to Cyprus, and urged Ptolemy to step down without a battle, promising him a wealthy and honourable retirement (for the Roman people would give him a priesthood of the goddess on Paphos¹⁸⁷). Cato himself spent some time in Rhodes, preparing the campaign and waiting for Ptolemy's replies.

Meanwhile the other Ptolemy, the king of Egypt, had abandoned Alexandria after an angry dispute with his citizens,¹⁸⁸ and was sailing

to Rome in the hope that Pompey and Caesar would restore him by force. Ptolemy wanted to meet Cato and sent a message to him, expecting that Cato would come to him. Cato happened to be taking a course of laxatives¹⁸⁹ at the time, and sent instructions to Ptolemy to come to him if he wanted a meeting. When Ptolemy arrived, Cato did not get up or go forward to welcome him, but greeted him as if he were an ordinary person and told him to sit down. That was the first thing that disconcerted Ptolemy, who was taken aback by the contrast between Cato's simple and ordinary habits and his arrogant and stern character. Then Ptolemy began to speak about his predicament, and was treated to a lecture which was full of good sense and plain speaking, with Cato remonstrating with him and explaining how different from his previous happy existence would be the servility and the tribulations and the bribery and the greed of the powerful men at Rome to which he would have to subject himself: even if all Egypt were converted into cash it would barely be enough for them. He would do far better to sail back home and come to terms with his citizens, and Cato himself would be willing to sail with him and do what he could to bring about a reconciliation. These words had such an effect on Ptolemy that it was as if he had come to his senses after a fit of frenzy or derangement: he recognized the wisdom of the man and the truth of what he had said, and did his best to follow that advice. His friends, however, proved too much for him, and he resumed his previous course; and as soon as he reached Rome and came to the doorstep of his first magistrate, he began to rue his mistake. What Cato had said now seemed to him some prophecy of a god, not just the words of a man of virtue.

36. Cato now had a stroke of luck, for the other Ptolemy, the one in Cyprus, took poison and killed himself. It was said that he had left a huge treasure. Cato decided to sail to Byzantium himself and send his nephew Brutus to Cyprus,¹⁹⁰ as he did not entirely trust Canidius. He reconciled the city with its exiles and left Byzantium in a state of harmony, and then sailed to Cyprus. There was a vast regal treasure in the form of goblets and tables and jewels and purple robes, and all of it needed to be sold and turned into cash. Cato insisted on doing everything meticulously and getting the highest price possible for every sale; he wanted to be present at everything himself and to ensure that every small detail of the calculation was right. He did not even trust the market experts on this, but suspected everyone – staff, auctioneers, purchasers, his own friends. Eventually he talked to every purchaser in person and encouraged them to bid, and that was how he sold most of the goods. This display of distrust offended his friends, and Munatius in particular, the one who was closest of all to him, was

almost implacably angry with him: when Caesar was writing his pamphlet against Cato,¹⁹¹ this part of his attack offered him the chance for the bitterest invective.

37. Munatius himself, however, says that the origin of his anger was not Cato's distrust, but rather a mixture of Cato's contemptuous behaviour towards him and Munatius's own jealousy of Canidius. (For Munatius published his own book on Cato, which Thrasea took and followed as his main authority.)¹⁹² Munatius says that he was the last of the party to arrive in Cyprus and was put in a dilapidated lodging; then he called on Cato and was turned back at the door, for Cato was busy inside on some business with Canidius. Munatius protested mildly, but the response from Cato was anything but mild: he told him that excessive friendship (in Theophrastus's words)¹⁹³ often leads to hate. 'Look at yourself, for instance,' he said; 'because you are particularly friendly towards me you think that you are getting less respect than you deserve, and you resent it. I am employing Canidius because he has the experience and because I trust him more than the others: he came here at the beginning, and I think he is honest.'¹⁹⁴ Cato said this to him in private (so Munatius reports), but then also told Canidius. When Munatius realized this, he tells us that he would no longer come to dinner with Cato, and refused to act as his adviser when he was called upon to do so. Cato threatened him that he would take security for his future behaviour, treating him like a disobedient subordinate. Munatius told him to go ahead: he didn't care. And he stayed angry, so he says, for a long time. Finally Marcia – for she was still Cato's wife¹⁹⁵ – spoke to Cato about this. Munatius reports that he was then invited to dinner by Barca.¹⁹⁶ On that evening Cato arrived after the others, when all were already lying on their couches, and he asked where he should recline: wherever he wanted, said Barca. Cato looked round, and said, 'By Munatius,' and went and took his place next to him – but showed no other sign of friendliness over the dinner. Marcia then spoke to Cato again, and Cato wrote to tell Munatius that he wanted to discuss something with him. He arrived early at the house, so he says, and Marcia kept him back until all the others had left; then Cato came in, threw his arms around him, embraced him and spoke again to him with real warmth.

I have spent time on this because I think it just as telling as Cato's great public actions in giving the reader illumination and insight into the man's character.

38. Cato collected a little less than 7,000 talents.¹⁹⁷ He was nervous about the long voyage, and obtained a large number of containers, each containing 2 talents and 500 drachmas.¹⁹⁸ He attached a long rope to each of them and tied a large cork to the end of the rope, so

that in the case of shipwreck it would work like a buoy and indicate the location. The money in fact was almost all transported safely, but he had been carefully keeping two notebooks with records of all the transactions, and he lost both copies. One of them was being carried by a freedman called Philarguros, who was wrecked after setting sail from Cenchreae,¹⁹⁹ and the book was lost along with the cargo. The second he took himself, and kept it safe as far as Corcyra. There he camped in the market-place. It was cold, the sailors lit a lot of fires, the tents caught alight and the notebook was destroyed. The king's stewards were present at Rome and would be able to disprove any allegations of impropriety that enemies or informers might make;²⁰⁰ but Cato was still very annoyed, and the reason was that he had hoped to use the accounts not to defend himself but to serve as a model of meticulousness for others.²⁰¹

39. When the ships came to port,²⁰² the Romans were alerted to their arrival, and all the magistrates and priests, the whole senate and a large part of the people came to the river to welcome them. The banks themselves were no longer visible; Cato's arrival was just as grand and honorific as any triumph. Still, some regarded it as ill-judged and stubborn that, when the consuls and praetors were present, Cato did not disembark to meet them nor halt the ship, but carried on rowing swiftly past the river-bank on this royal vessel with its six banks of oars, and did not stop until he brought the fleet to anchor in the dockyard.

All the same, when the money was carried through the forum the people were thunderstruck by the quantity, and the senate met, praised Cato appropriately and voted him an extraordinary praetorship and the right to watch the games in a purple-edged toga. Cato would not accept this, but he did persuade the senate to grant freedom to Nicias, the steward of the royal household: Cato attested his diligence and integrity. Philippus, Marcia's father, was consul at the time,²⁰³ and in a way the prestige and power of that office accrued to Cato himself; Philippus's colleague²⁰⁴ too added to Cato's honours, influenced by the man's virtue just as much as Philippus by his personal relationship.

40. Cicero was now back from the exile²⁰⁵ into which he had been driven by Clodius, and was very influential. Clodius had deposited the records of his tribunate on the Capitol, and Cicero used force to take them away and destroy them in Clodius's absence.²⁰⁶ The senate met to discuss this, with Clodius attacking Cicero for what he had done. Cicero's argument was that Clodius's tribunate had been illegal,²⁰⁷ and that everything he had done and recorded was therefore invalid. Cato interrupted him to object while he was speaking, and finally he got up

himself and said that he could see nothing sound or valuable in Clodius's politics; still, if his tribunicial actions were to be revoked all of his own settlement of Cyprus would become invalid, as it could not have been a legal mission if it were proposed by an illegal magistrate. In fact, said Cato, there was nothing illegal in Clodius's election as tribune, for the law allowed for transfer from a patrician family to a plebeian.²⁰⁸ If he had exercised his rule badly, he was not the first, and the proper procedure was to call the man to account for his wrongdoing, not to destroy the office, which had itself been abused by his tenure. Cicero was furious, and for a long time he refused to treat Cato as a friend; but they were finally reconciled.²⁰⁹

41. Then²¹⁰ Caesar crossed the Alps and met with Pompey and Crassus.²¹¹ They agreed that Pompey and Crassus should stand together for a second consulship,²¹² and once they had entered office they should vote Caesar a renewal of his command for a second period of the same length,²¹³ and vote themselves the biggest provinces, money and military forces. This amounted to a conspiracy to share out the empire and destroy the constitution.

There were many good men who were planning to stand for office, but the sight of Pompey and Crassus as candidates was enough to put most of them off. The exception was Lucius Domitius, who was married to Cato's sister Porcia.²¹⁴ Cato persuaded him not to stand down or yield: the struggle was not for a magistracy, but for the freedom of Rome. And indeed, among that part of the citizens which retained some political sense, people were saying that they could not allow the concentration of the power of Crassus and Pompey, for it would make their tenure of the consulship altogether overbearing and oppressive, and it was important to stop one or other of them from being elected. They collected together to support Domitius, urging and encouraging him to stand and reassuring him that many who did not dare to speak would still vote for him.

This too was what Pompey's supporters feared, so they laid an ambush for Domitius as he was coming down to the Campus²¹⁵ by torchlight at dawn. The lamp-bearer who was leading the procession tried to protect Domitius, and was the first to be hit and to fall down dead; then those who were following him were also wounded, and all fled except for Cato and Domitius. Cato held him back, even though he had himself been wounded on the arm, and urged Domitius to stay and not abandon the cause as long as there was breath left in their body. It was the struggle for liberty against the tyrants, he said: if one wanted to know how they would use their power, one had only to look at the path of crime they were taking in order to get it.

42. Still, Domitius quailed under the danger, fled to his house, and

Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls.²¹⁶ Cato did not give up his opposition, but announced his own candidature for the praetorship, wanting to use this as a base for the contest against them, and have some status higher than that of a private citizen to confront men in office. This too alarmed Pompey and Crassus, thinking that the person of Cato would be enough to make the praetorship a match for the consulship, and so they first summoned the senate suddenly, with most unaware that this was happening, and passed a vote that the incoming praetors should take up their office immediately without leaving the usual interval to allow prosecutions for bribery.²¹⁷ Once this decree had effectively removed the possibility of being called to account for corruption, they advanced their own henchmen and friends to the praetorships: they distributed money themselves, and they stood by to oversee the casting of the votes. But Cato's virtue and reputation were a match even for that, as the general people felt sufficient shame to think that it would be a dreadful thing to sell Cato when it would have been honourable to buy him as praetor for the city. So the first of the tribes to be summoned²¹⁸ declared him elected. At that, Pompey suddenly declared that he could hear thunder – a most disgraceful lie – and dismissed the assembly, for it was the custom to regard such things as inauspicious and conduct no public business when such a divine portent had occurred. Pompey and Crassus resumed their massive bribery, violently excluded the better sort of citizen from the Campus and secured the election of Vatinius²¹⁹ as praetor instead of Cato. On that occasion they say that those who had cast their votes so wrongly and unlawfully disappeared straight afterwards as if they were running away; the others gathered indignantly, and a tribune summoned them to an immediate assembly.²²⁰ Cato, it is said, addressed it, and foretold all that was going to happen to the city as if he were divinely inspired: he urged the citizens on against Pompey and Crassus, who clearly (he said) had the sorts of plans and the sorts of policies that made them afraid of being worsted by Cato if he were praetor. At the end, such a vast crowd accompanied him as he went home that it was bigger than all those put together that escorted the praetors-elect.

43. Gaius Trebonius proposed a bill allotting provinces to the consuls,²²¹ so that one would have Spain and Africa²²² and the other Syria and Egypt:²²³ both were empowered to employ sea and land forces to fight and conquer anyone they chose.²²⁴ Others regarded opposition as hopeless and did not even try to speak against the measure, but Cato got up before the vote was cast and indicated that he wanted to speak.²²⁵ Reluctantly they allowed him two hours. Once he had spent that time in arguments and explanations and prophecies,

they tried to stop him, and when he stood his ground an attendant went to him and dragged him down. But even from where he stood below the tribunal he kept shouting, and he had a sympathetic audience who shared his indignation. So the attendant grabbed him again and expelled him from the forum. No sooner had he been released than he returned and rushed towards the tribunal, crying at the top of his voice to the citizens to come to his assistance. This happened again and again, until Trebonius, furious, ordered him to be taken to prison. He was followed by a crowd listening to him speaking as he went, and Trebonius was alarmed enough to release him. That day, then, Cato prevented a conclusion to the debate.²²⁶

On the following days Pompey and Crassus intimidated some of the citizens, procured others with favours and bribes, and used armed force to prevent Aquillius, one of the tribunes,²²⁷ from leaving the senate-house; when Cato himself shouted out that he had heard thunder they threw him out of the forum, and wounded a considerable number of citizens and actually killed a few. Thus they carried the bill by force. Many were so angry that they gathered together and threw stones at Pompey's statues; Cato however came up and stopped this himself.

When, however, a second bill was proposed concerning provinces and armies for Caesar,²²⁸ Cato no longer turned to the people but to Pompey himself. He solemnly called on him to witness what was happening, and prophesied that Pompey was lifting Caesar as a burden on to his own shoulders: Pompey did not realize it yet, but there would come a time when he would begin to feel it too much for him, and then he would not be able either to carry it or to put it down. Pompey would fall upon the city, burden and all – and that was when he would remember Cato's advice, and see that it contained not just what was good and right, but also what was in Pompey's own interest. Pompey heard this many times, but paid no attention and let things slide. He was so convinced of his own good fortune and power that he could not believe Caesar would change.

44. Cato was, however, elected praetor for the following year.²²⁹ It seemed to observers that what his excellent administration added to the office in terms of majesty and grandeur was not enough to compensate for what he took away from it by diminishing its dignity, often turning up at the tribunal without shoes or tunic²³⁰ and conducting capital trials of distinguished men while dressed in that way. Some also say that he would do business after drinking wine at lunch-time, but that charge is not true.²³¹

By now the populace was being thoroughly corrupted by the bribes offered by power-hungry politicians, and had grown accustomed to

accept these as a matter of daily routine. Cato wanted to root out this disease completely from the state, and persuaded the senate to pass a decree requiring successful candidates, if they did not face a prosecution, to come anyway to a sworn law-court and submit their accounts.²³² This upset candidates – and upset even more the ordinary people who had been picking up the bribes. When Cato was walking to the tribunal one morning, they fell on him in a crowd, shouting and abusing him and throwing stones,²³³ so that everybody else took flight from the tribunal and he himself, pushed around by the crowd and carried along by it, only just managed to make his way to the rostra. Once he had risen to his feet there, his strong and resolute expression was enough to quell the tumult immediately and stop the shouting. He said what was appropriate, and was quietly listened to: that put an end to the disturbance. The senate passed a motion praising him. ‘But I do not praise you’, he replied, ‘for abandoning a praetor in danger and not coming to his aid.’

Each of the candidates for office²³⁴ now found himself in a quandary. They were afraid of distributing bribes themselves, and also afraid that others might do it and they would lose the office. They consequently decided that they should meet together and leave a deposit of 125,000 drachmas²³⁵ apiece, and after this they would all conduct their campaigns in a correct and proper way; anyone who broke the agreement and gave a bribe would lose his deposit. They then chose Cato to be their witness, take care of the money and act as umpire; they brought the money and offered to leave it with him, then wrote him bonds when he would not take the cash but instead accepted guarantees from each.

When the day came for the election, Cato stood beside the presiding tribune and kept watch on the voting; he then announced that one of the candidates had misbehaved, and called upon him to pay his deposit over to the rest. The candidates themselves expressed their admiration for Cato’s correctness, even though they remitted the payment, thinking that they had already made the malefactor pay them a sufficient penalty. But others were not pleased, and it was this in particular that made people jealous: it was as if he had acquired for himself the authority of senate, law-courts and magistracies.²³⁶

Indeed, more jealousy tends to attach to a reputation and belief in a person’s justice than in the case of any other virtue, because it is justice that brings one power and the confidence of ordinary people. They do not simply give a person honour as they do with the brave, nor admiration as they do with the wise, but they give real affection to the just and have belief and confidence in them. Those who practise the other virtues sometimes inspire fear and sometimes distrust; and besides, people think that those others are outstanding through their

natural gifts rather than through any exercise of will. Wisdom and bravery are explained respectively through a sort of acuteness and through mental strength, but it is open to any of us to become just as soon as we will it, and so one feels shame for unjust behaviour as a vice for which there is no excuse.

45. For that reason all the big men were Cato's enemies, as he was the one who showed them up for what they were. Pompey in particular regarded Cato's reputation as tantamount to the destruction of his own power, and kept setting up people to throw abuse at him. These included Clodius, who had by now slunk back to Pompey²³⁷ and was giving Cato a tongue-lashing, accusing him of extensive embezzlement of the money from Cyprus and of hostility to Pompey for refusing the marriage-alliance with his daughter.²³⁸ Cato's reply was that he had brought back more wealth to the city from Cyprus, despite not having been given a single horse or soldier, than Pompey had acquired after so many wars and triumphs and after stirring up the whole world.²³⁹ He had never wished to have Pompey as a kinsman, but this was not because he had regarded him as unworthy but because he realized the gulf between them in politics. 'I refused to take a province', he said, 'when one was offered to me after the praetorship, while he takes some for himself and gives some to others; and now he has given a legion, six thousand men, to Caesar in Gaul.²⁴⁰ Caesar did not ask you for this, and Pompey did not consult you about giving it: so great are the forces and arms and cavalry that are now given by way of private favours and deals. He is called commander and general, but hands over to others the armies and provinces while he himself lurks by the city,²⁴¹ playing the impresario and contriving disagreements and quarrels over candidatures. We can see what he is doing: he is courting monarchy through anarchy.'

46. Those were the terms in which he defended himself against Pompey. There was also a certain friend of his who took him as a model, Marcus Favonius,²⁴² rather as they say that Apollodorus of Phalerum was a follower of Socrates long ago:²⁴³ that is, he was fanatically enthusiastic about what Cato said, with no half measures or moderation, but fastening on it in a frenzy and draining it down like unmixed wine. This man stood for an aedileship and failed. Cato was there, and when he inspected the voting tablets he discovered they were all written in the same hand; after exposing the malpractice he summoned the tribunes and had the electoral assembly dissolved, and Favonius was subsequently elected. When he entered on office he conducted everything diligently, and this included presiding over the spectacles in the theatre. He gave as the acting prizes crowns that were not made of gold but, as at the Olympics, of olive, and

distributed as presents nothing expensive but, for Greeks, beets and lettuces and radishes and pears, and for Romans jars of wine and slices of pork and figs and cucumbers and bundles of wood. Some regarded this thriftiness as a laughing matter, others were pleased to see Cato's uncompromising austerity gently changing into something a little lighter. Finally Favonius dashed into the crowd, sat down among the spectators, applauded Cato and shouted out to him to present the prizes and pay them the marks of honour; he called upon the audience to do the same, as if he was giving his own authority over to Cato. Meanwhile, in the other theatre, Favonius's colleague Curio²⁴⁴ was giving a lavish display – yet people left his spectacle and came here instead, and cheerfully joined in the game of Favonius playing at being the private citizen and Cato at being the president. Cato was prepared to do this because he wanted to make fun of it all, and to teach the lesson that when one is playing one ought to do it playfully, and to give simple favours rather than anything extravagant or elaborate. To do the opposite was to waste hard thinking and energy on matters that were trivial.

47. Then Scipio, Hypsaeus and Milo were candidates for the consulship.²⁴⁵ This time it was not simply a matter of those types of wrongdoing that were by now familiar companions of the political scene, corruption and bribery: they had reached a pitch of crazed unscrupulousness that amounted to jostling their way through arms and bloodshed to outright civil war. Some argued that Pompey should preside over the elections, and at first Cato opposed the proposal, saying that the laws ought to be protecting Pompey rather than Pompey the laws. But when the anarchy persisted for a long time – three legions were surrounding the forum every day and the trouble was close to being unstoppable – Cato took the view that it was better for the senate to give control voluntarily to Pompey before it reached the stage where there was no choice, and to use the most moderate of irregularities as a remedy to conserve what mattered most and to introduce monarchy rather than to see the civil conflict end in anarchy.²⁴⁶ It was Bibulus, Cato's relative,²⁴⁷ who proposed in the senate that Pompey should be appointed sole consul, arguing that either he would be the man to put everything to rights or, if not, the state would at least be slaves of the best and most powerful of the masters on offer. Cato then rose and, to everyone's surprise, backed what Bibulus had said and expressed the view that any authority was better than no authority at all. He said that he thought Pompey would deal with matters in the best way possible, and if the city were entrusted to him he would ensure its safety.

48. So Pompey was made consul.²⁴⁸ He asked Cato to come and see

him in the suburbs, and when he arrived he greeted him warmly, embraced him, grasped his hand, thanked him for his support and asked him to act as his adviser and consultant. Cato's reply was that what he had said in the past had never come from personal hostility to Pompey, and what he had said now had not been a matter deserving thanks: everything had been for the good of the city. If Pompey were to invite him to advise on private matters he was willing to do so, but on public affairs he would anyway say what he thought, invited or not. And indeed he did as he said he would. First came a measure of Pompey imposing new sanctions and large penalties on those who had given bribes to the people in the past:²⁴⁹ Cato's advice was to forget the past and concentrate on the future, for if one started to investigate past malefactions it would be hard to know where to stop, and if new punishments were imposed for wrongdoing it would be unfair to penalize people under a law that did not exist at the time of their malpractice. Then many prominent citizens were put on trial, including some friends and relatives of Pompey himself.²⁵⁰ When Cato saw that he was being lenient and indulgent in many cases, he censured him vehemently and roused him into taking action. Next came an episode when, after passing a law forbidding the customary speeches about a defendant's good character,²⁵¹ Pompey himself wrote a letter praising Munatius Plancus²⁵² and handed it in for his trial: it so happened that Cato was himself one of the jurors, and he clapped his hands over his ears and tried to prevent the testimonial from being read.²⁵³ Plancus managed to get Cato discharged from the jury, but he was still convicted.

Cato indeed posed an intractable and perplexing problem to defendants, for they neither wanted him to remain on the jury nor dared to demand that he step down. A few were convicted precisely because, in challenging Cato as a juror, they gave the impression of having no confidence in their own case; some too had to face a tongue-lashing from accusers who alleged that it was an outrage for them to turn down Cato when he was on offer as a juror.

49. It was only when Caesar's activities became clear – for while Caesar himself was ensconced with his legions in Gaul, weapons in hand, he was getting others, through his gifts and his money and his friends, to gain power in the city – that Cato's prophecies finally stirred Pompey into action.²⁵⁴ Hitherto he had refused to believe it; now he finally had a vision of the threat he faced. But still he was far too full of hesitation and timorous delay when it came to doing anything to stop Caesar, and so Cato announced his own candidature for the consulship,²⁵⁵ on a programme of either taking away Caesar's forces straight away or at least exposing what he was plotting. Both

his rival-candidates were good men, and one of them, Sulpicius,²⁵⁶ had benefited greatly from Cato's reputation in the city and his influence. He seemed therefore to be acting badly and ungratefully, but Cato himself refused to criticize him: 'Is it any surprise', he asked, 'if a person refuses to give up to another the thing that he prizes most highly?' He did, however, persuade the senate to insist that candidates for office should do their own canvassing, and not have anyone else go around and campaign or ask for votes on their behalf.²⁵⁷ This annoyed people even more. It was as if he had robbed them not merely of their chance to make money but also of the ability to perform a favour for their preferred candidates, thus depriving the ordinary people of honour as well as of funds. Furthermore, he was not a particularly effective canvasser in his own case, but he approached people in the way that one might expect from his character: it was more important to him to preserve the glory he had won for his life than to acquire any additional glory that the office would bring. Nor would he allow his friends to adopt any of the methods that win over and gain the favour of the populace. And so he failed to be elected.

50. A humiliation of that sort normally brought prolonged dejection and distress not merely to the candidates themselves but also to their friends and relatives. Yet Cato took what had happened with such acquiescence that after his morning oiling he went and played ball in the Campus,²⁵⁸ then in the afternoon he followed his usual practice, went down to the forum without shoes or tunic and walked about with his friends. Cicero takes him to task²⁵⁹ for failing to meet the demands of a crisis which called for a leader of Cato's calibre, and making no effort to win over the people with a show of generous bonhomie, but giving up and resigning the struggle for the future, even though he had been prepared to stand for the praetorship a second time.²⁶⁰ Cato explained that he had lost the praetorship not because it was the people's will but because they were bribed or forced to vote the way they did, but that there had been no malpractice in the consular elections, and that he therefore realized that it had been his own character that had been his problem with the people. And no person of sense, he added, would change his character to suit other people, nor behave in character a second time and suffer the same fate once again.

51. There was an occasion when Caesar launched an assault on some dangerous peoples, took great risks and won; but he was thought to have attacked the German enemy during a truce and killed 300,000 of them.²⁶¹ The general view was that the people should make sacrifices to celebrate the victory, but Cato proposed instead that they should

hand over Caesar to the people he had wronged rather than turning on themselves the curse he had incurred or allowing it to fall on the city.²⁶² 'No,' he said, 'we should rather sacrifice in thanks to the gods for not punishing our soldiers for their general's madness and folly, and for sparing the city!' This led Caesar to write a letter and send it to the senate. It was full of strongly worded and slanderous attacks on Cato; when it was read out, Cato rose to his feet and gave a speech which conveyed thoughtfulness and thorough preparation rather than anger and aggressiveness. He showed that the charges that Caesar had made had the character of rude mockery and childish, vulgar humour; then he went through all Caesar's planning from the beginning, and exposed what he had in mind as surely as if he had been a partner and co-conspirator rather than an enemy. It was not the children of Britons or Celts they had to fear, he declared, it was Caesar himself, if only they had any sense. This had such a sharp impact that Caesar's friends came to regret reading out the letter in the senate and giving Cato the opportunity to make such good points and launch so accurate a denunciation.

But nothing was passed; it was simply said that it would be right for someone to be appointed to succeed Caesar.²⁶³ The friends of Caesar demanded that either Pompey too should lay down his arms and surrender his provinces or that neither of them should do so.²⁶⁴ At this Cato shouted out that what he had prophesied had now come about, and Caesar was turning to violence; he was now using openly that power that he had acquired through deceiving and cheating the city. He achieved nothing outside the senate, for the people always wanted Caesar to be dominant, but the senate believed what he said – and yet were fearful of the people.²⁶⁵

52. Then Ariminum fell, and news arrived that Caesar and his army were on the march for Rome.²⁶⁶ Now everyone looked to Cato:²⁶⁷ that was true of the people as a whole and also of Pompey himself, as they all recognized that he had been the only person to sense the truth about Caesar's intention from the beginning and the first to expose it in public. Cato's response was to say, 'If a certain person among you had been persuaded by my predictions and my advice, my friends, then you would not now be in fear of one man alone, nor have had one man alone in whom to place your hopes.' Pompey replied that Cato had proved the better prophet but Pompey the better friend. At that Cato proposed that the senate should entrust the state to Pompey alone,²⁶⁸ for those who had done great harm should have the obligation to put it right.

Pompey, however, had no troops ready for action, and those he now levied were visibly lacking in enthusiasm. So he left Rome.²⁶⁹

Cato took the decision to follow him and share his flight. He sent his younger son²⁷⁰ to safety in Bruttium, where Munatius would look after him, but kept his older son²⁷¹ with him. That left his house and his daughters with no one to take care of them, and so he remarried Marcia, who was now a widow – and a very wealthy one, for she had inherited the estate of Hortensius on his death.²⁷² That became a particular target for Caesar's abuse,²⁷³ for he accused him of avaricious money-grabbing in this marriage. What (he asked) would be the point of giving up a wife if he wanted one, or taking her back if he did not, if it had not been a matter of giving her to Hortensius as a bait and lending a young wife out to get a rich one back? An appropriate reply would be to quote Euripides:

First to the unspeakable: for unspeakable it is
To talk of you as coward, Heracles.²⁷⁴

For to accuse Cato of money-grabbing is as bad as accusing Heracles of cowardice. There remain reasons, though, why one might question whether Cato behaved as well as he might in the matter of this marriage.

In any case, Cato announced his engagement to Marcia, and entrusted his house and daughters to her. He himself left to follow Pompey.

53. From that day on, they say that he refused to shave or cut his hair or wear a garland on his head, and conducted himself till the day of his death in such a way as to project grief, dejection and sadness at the plight of his country, in times alike of success and of defeat.

The lot assigned Sicily to him as his province,²⁷⁵ and he crossed to Syracuse. There he heard that Asinius Pollio had been sent by the enemy to Messene with an army.²⁷⁶ He sent to him and demanded an explanation for his crossing: Pollio retorted by asking Cato to explain why everything in the state had changed.²⁷⁷ Then news arrived that Pompey had totally abandoned Italy and was encamped at Dyrrhachium.²⁷⁸ Cato's comment was that Heaven was indeed unpredictable and hard to read, if Pompey had been so invincible at the time when he was doing nothing good or right, yet now found himself abandoned by Fortune when he was trying to save his country and champion its freedom. He said that he was capable of driving Asinius out of Sicily, but as another stronger force was on its way he was reluctant to involve the island in a war that would cause its destruction; so, advising Syracuse to join the stronger side and secure its own safety, he sailed away.²⁷⁹

Once in Pompey's camp he always held to a single view, that it was right to drag out the war in the hope of reaching a settlement: an

armed contest which settled matters by the sword could only mean a self-inflicted catastrophe for the state. He persuaded Pompey and his advisers to adopt a course akin to this, avoiding the plunder of any subject-city or the killing of any Roman except in battle. This won general acclaim and brought over many to Pompey's side, welcoming this display of moderation and restraint.

54. Next he was sent on a mission to Asia, with a brief to give assistance to those who were gathering ships and troops there. With him he took his sister Servilia,²⁸⁰ together with the child of her marriage to Lucullus.²⁸¹ She was now a widow, and this did a great deal to defend her against the gossip about her sexual behaviour, given that she voluntarily accepted Cato's guardianship and shared his journeys and his way of life; not that Caesar neglected the chance to include Cato's relations with Servilia too in his slanderous attacks.²⁸²

It appears that Pompey's generals made no use of Cato except in the case of the Rhodians. He persuaded them to take Pompey's side, then left Servilia and the child there when he rejoined Pompey, who by that time had collected an impressive sea- and land-force. It was at this point that Pompey's true thoughts were most clearly exposed. His initial intention was to entrust Cato with command of the fleet, which consisted of at least five hundred warships and a whole host of Liburnians,²⁸³ scouting ships and open boats. He swiftly, though, realized or was told by his friends that Cato's one overriding political concern was to endure his country's liberty, and that, once in control of such a large force, on the day that Caesar was defeated he would demand that Pompey too immediately lay down his arms and obey the constitution.²⁸⁴ At this he changed his mind, even though he had already spoken to Cato about it, and appointed Bibulus²⁸⁵ as his admiral.

He did not see any diminution in Cato's enthusiasm because of this, however. Indeed, a story is told about the preliminaries to a battle at Dyrrhachium. When Pompey gave an encouraging speech to his troops and told each of the other commanders to do the same, the troops listened sullenly and silently to most, until Cato rose at the end to speak. He went through the philosophical arguments about freedom and courage and death and glory, and spoke with great emotion; eventually he turned to call upon the gods, present as they surely were and looking upon this struggle for the country. At this the soldiers raised a cry and were inspired with such violent enthusiasm that all were filled with confidence and urged their commanders to lead them into battle. And they won, and routed the enemy:²⁸⁶ still, Caesar was saved from total defeat by his own protecting deity, which exploited the caution and mistrust that Pompey showed in his own good

fortune. I have described this in the *Pompey*.²⁸⁷ Everyone else was filled with joy and talking boastfully of what they had achieved – but Cato wept for his country and lamented the terrible and destructive lust for power that had led to this, seeing so many good citizens dead by one another's hands.

55. Pompey broke camp and left for Thessaly in pursuit of Caesar, leaving at Dyrrhachium many weapons and stores as well as the families of combatants. He appointed Cato to command and take care of all this, together with fifteen cohorts of troops. This was inspired by a mix of trust and fear: for if Pompey were to lose he regarded Cato as the most reliable of his lieutenants, and if he were to win Cato would not, if present at the battlefield, allow him to exploit the situation in the way he wanted.²⁸⁸ Many other distinguished men were discarded at Dyrrhachium along with Cato.²⁸⁹

Then came the defeat at Pharsalus.²⁹⁰ Cato decided that, if Pompey were dead, he would convey the people under his protection to Italy, while he himself would live in exile, as far as possible from the tyranny; if Pompey were safe, he would do everything he could to preserve the force for him. He therefore crossed to Corcyra, where the fleet was based.²⁹¹ On the question of command he deferred to Cicero, given that Cicero was an ex-consul while he himself was an ex-praetor, but Cicero refused and left for Italy.²⁹² Cato saw that the young Pompey,²⁹³ a stubborn but spirited man, was wanting to punish those who were sailing away and was going to turn to violence against Cicero first of all; but Cato took him aside, advised him against this and calmed him down.²⁹⁴ Thus he quite clearly saved Cicero's life, as well as ensuring that the others too could live without fear.

56. He worked out that Pompey the Great²⁹⁵ would make his escape to Egypt or Libya, and was anxious to join him; he put out to sea with all his forces, but did not undertake the voyage itself before giving those who were reluctant the opportunity to leave or to stay behind. On reaching Libya he sailed along the coast, where he met Sextus, the younger of Pompey's sons,²⁹⁶ and learnt from him of the death of his father in Egypt.²⁹⁷ Everyone was deeply distressed, and no one, now Pompey was dead, would hear of following any leader other than Cato himself. Cato was full of shame and pity at the notion of forsaking good men who had shown their trust in him and abandoning them helpless in a foreign land, and so he accepted the command and went on along the coast to Cyrene: there the townspeople granted him entry to the town, after refusing this to Labienus²⁹⁸ a few days earlier.

News reached him here that Pompey's father-in-law Scipio²⁹⁹ had been well received by King Juba,³⁰⁰ and that Attius Varus,³⁰¹ who had been appointed by Pompey to govern Libya, was with them with an

army. So Cato set out on foot, even though it was winter, together with many mules that he had collected to carry water, and a large number of cattle.³⁰² His train also included chariots and the ‘Psylli’, who are experts at healing snakebites. (Their technique is to suck out the poison by mouth, and to use chants to lull and soothe the snakes themselves.)³⁰³ The march lasted seven days³⁰⁴ without respite, with Cato at its head, walking rather than riding on horse or mule.³⁰⁵ He would also eat while sitting rather than reclining, just as he had determined to do from the day of the defeat at Pharsalus: this was an additional display of grief, as he was refusing to recline except for sleep. He spent the rest of the winter in Libya, and then reviewed his army. It numbered a little short of 10,000 men.

57. The situation of Varus and Scipio was a sorry one. They were on bad terms with one another, and each cultivated Juba to try to get his support; meanwhile, the wealthy and powerful Juba was himself behaving with intolerable arrogance and presumption. On his first meeting with Cato he even placed his own chair between that of Scipio and Cato: when Cato saw this, he picked up his own chair and moved it to the other side, so that Scipio would have the position of honour between them, even though Scipio was his personal enemy and had published a pamphlet of attacks on him.³⁰⁶ (And then his critics³⁰⁷ attach no importance to this, but take him to task for a time in Sicily when, as a mark of respect for the man’s philosophy, he yielded that central position to Philostratus as they walked around.³⁰⁸) On this occasion he certainly managed to put a stop to Juba’s bad behaviour, at a time when he had virtually reduced Scipio and the others to his own vice-gerents, and Cato also succeeded in reconciling the Roman commanders with one another.

Everyone called on Cato to take command, and Scipio and Varus were themselves the first to offer to step down in his favour; but Cato said that he had no intention of breaking the laws when their war was about supporting those laws against their transgressor, and he as a *propraetor* would not put himself at the head when a *proconsul* was present. For Scipio had indeed been made *proconsul*, and his very name gave the ordinary soldiers confidence that they would win, with a Scipio in command in Africa.³⁰⁹

58. But, when Scipio took over the command, his first thought was to gratify Juba by massacring the people of Utica and destroying the city, on the grounds that they had taken Caesar’s side. Cato refused to let this happen: he cried out in protest in the council, he called humans and gods to witness what was happening, and thus just managed to save the people from this act of savagery. It was then partly at their own wish and partly at Scipio’s request that he accepted the task of

guarding the city and preventing them from willingly or unwillingly joining Caesar's side. The place was valuable to whichever side possessed it, and easy to defend: now Cato strengthened their position still further. He brought in a massive amount of grain, and improved the fortification of the walls, erecting towers and building strong trenches and palisades in front of the city. He gave orders that those Uticans who were of military age should camp in the trenches, after first handing over their weapons to him; he kept the others within the city, taking strict care that they should not be wronged or suffer any harm at the hands of the Romans. He sent out many weapons and stores and provisions to those in the camp, and in general treated the city as his quartermaster's store. As for the advice that he had given Pompey before and now gave Scipio again – not to fight a battle against so formidable a man of war as Caesar, but to play a waiting game, for every tyranny finds its strength waning with time – Scipio was too stubborn to take it: indeed, on one occasion he wrote accusing Cato of cowardice, if he was not merely content to stay there himself sitting comfortably within a walled city but also refused to allow others to grasp opportunities boldly when it was sensible to do so. Cato wrote back saying that he was prepared to take the troops and cavalry that he had himself brought to Africa, and cross with them to Italy in order to draw Caesar away from the other armies. When Scipio regarded that too as a matter for mockery, Cato made it clear that he had come to regret ceding command to him, now that it was evident both that Scipio had no idea how to fight the war and that, if he managed anyway to win a lucky success, he would be a ruthless victor in the way he would treat his fellow-citizens. That led Cato to the view, one he expressed openly to his friends, that the inexperience and rashness of their commanders made him pessimistic about the war's outcome; but that if a stroke of good luck were to give them victory and Caesar were to be destroyed, he would not stay in Rome himself, but would go into exile to escape the harshness and violent temper of Scipio, a man who was already making terrible, arrogant threats against many.

But that did not happen; instead things turned out the way Cato expected. Late at night there arrived a messenger from the camp after journeying for three days, announcing that there had been a great battle at Thapsus,³¹⁰ that the cause was totally lost, that Caesar was in control of the camps, that Scipio and Juba and a few others had fled and that all the rest of the army had perished.

59. The reaction to this was what one would expect of a city at war, and at night-time: the people were almost out of their mind at such news, and could barely restrain themselves from rushing out of the

walls. But Cato came out to the public; for the moment, he grabbed people as he met them rushing around and shouting, and gave them words of encouragement, saying that perhaps what had happened was not so bad but had been exaggerated. In this way he at least got rid of the element of astonishment and disorientation in their terror, and thus he calmed the disturbance. When dawn came he summoned a meeting at the Temple of Zeus of the three hundred men that he used as a council: these were Roman citizens who were active in Libya as traders or as moneylenders. Any senators present were also told to come, along with their children. While they were still gathering, he made his way there himself without any sign of distress or concern, just as if nothing new had happened, with a book in his hands from which he was reading.³¹¹ This consisted of a catalogue of the war-machines, weapons, grain, bows and arrows and ships. Once they were all there, he began with the three hundred, and delivered a speech full of praise for the zeal and loyalty that they had shown by their valuable contributions of money, counsel and physical help; he encouraged them now not to allow dispirit to break up their unity, and not to think of running away or of trying to secure their individual safety. If they all stayed together, Caesar would be less likely to feel dismissive of them if they fought on, and more likely to spare them if they turned to pleading. He told them to decide for themselves what to do: he would not blame them either way, and if they decided to give in to circumstances he would attribute their change to necessity; if they were resilient in this time of danger and accepted the risk in the cause of freedom, he would not merely praise them but also, in admiration of their courage, he would offer himself to be their leader and their colleague in the struggle, and he would do this until there could be no further doubt about their country's final destiny. That country, he reminded them, was not Utica nor Hadrumetum³¹² but Rome, and Rome was great enough to have often recovered from worse disasters than this. There were many factors, he said, in their favour, which offered hope of salvation: the biggest factor of all was that their enemy would be distracted by many calls on his attention, for Spain had revolted under the banner of the young Pompey,³¹³ and Rome itself had not yet totally accepted that unfamiliar bridle of tyranny but was indignantly ready to join in any chance of disruption. So they should not flee from danger, but rather learn from their enemy, who had been so regardless of his own safety in the interest of the greatest iniquities: whereas they would enjoy the most fortunate of lives if they won and the most glorious of deaths if they failed, and the uncertainties of war would decide which of these it was to be. All the same, he said that this must be for them to decide, and in return for their prior courage and loyalty he would join their

prayers that whatever they decided would turn out to be for the best.

60. That was the substance of Cato's speech. Some were inspired by his words to genuine confidence; most were so moved by his fearlessness and nobility and human feeling that they almost forgot the situation that they were in. They called on him as the only truly invincible leader who was superior to any fortune, and asked him to make use of their bodies and wealth and weapons just as he chose: it was better, they said, to die in his service than to live in betrayal of virtue as great as this.

Someone proposed freeing the slaves and most thought this a good idea, but Cato said he would not do this, for it was not lawful and not right; however, if their masters were to free them he would accept those who were of the right age to fight. At this there were many promises, and Cato gave instructions for volunteers' names to be taken, and then he left.

A little later there arrived letters from Juba and Scipio. Juba was hiding on a mountain with a few companions, and he asked what Cato had decided to do: for if he left Utica he would wait for him, and if he were under siege he would come to his help with an army. Scipio was anchored by a cliff not far from Utica, and was similarly waiting on events.

61. Cato decided to keep the messengers there until he could be sure of the reaction of the three hundred. The Roman senators were enthusiastic in their support, and immediately freed and armed their slaves; but the three hundred were ship-owning merchants who lent out their cash and therefore had most of their capital in the form of slaves, and so Cato's words did not stay in their minds for long. Just as porous bodies heat up quickly and then cool just as fast when the fire is removed, so it was with these citizens:³¹⁴ the sight of Cato invigorated and warmed them, but when they were deliberating on their own, fear of Caesar drove out any feeling of shame for Cato and for what was good. 'For who are we,' they asked, 'and who is this man whose orders we are refusing to obey? Is it not Caesar, who has acquired all the strength of Rome? And none of us is a Scipio or a Pompey – or a Cato. At times like this all people are frightened enough to think more dishonourably than they should: yet are we now to be the ones to take up the cause of Rome's liberty, and fight the man here, with Utica as our base – this man before whom Cato and Pompey fled, and yielded up all Italy? Are we freeing our slaves to fight Caesar, when we ourselves are only as free as he wishes us to be? It is not too late: we can still, poor friends, recognize what we are. So let us beg for the mercy of the master, and send men to plead on our behalf.'

That was what the more moderate among the three hundred advised, while most of them hatched plots against the senators, thinking that if they seized them they might have a way of appeasing Caesar's anger against themselves.

62. Cato realized their change of heart, and did not criticize them, but he did send the messengers back with a letter telling Scipio and Juba to keep away from Utica because the three hundred were not to be trusted.

The horsemen that had escaped from the battle (there were a fair number of these)³¹⁵ now arrived at Utica and sent three men to Cato. These three represented the divided views among the horsemen, with some wanting to go to Juba, some to join Cato and some nervous of entering Utica. Cato listened to what they had to say, then told Marcus Rubrius³¹⁶ to approach the three hundred and to take from them the lists of those freeing their slaves, but to do so quietly and without using any force. Meanwhile he gathered the senators, came out of the city and met up with the commanders of the cavalry, begging them not to abandon so many members of the Roman senate nor to choose Juba as their general instead of Cato: instead they should unite and secure their own safety along with that of others, coming into a city which could not be taken by force and had enough provisions and other equipment to survive a siege of many years. The senators reinforced these pleas with tears in their eyes. The cavalry commanders then consulted their men, while Cato sat on a nearby hillock along with the senators and waited for the horsemen's reply.

63. At this point Rubrius arrived, angrily denouncing the irresponsible and disruptive behaviour of the three hundred and saying that they were leading the city into revolt and chaos. This led the others to despair completely and turn to weeping and lamentation; Cato tried to encourage them, and also sent to the three hundred to ask them to stay their hand. Then the horsemen sent their response, and it was not a measured one. They did say that they had no wish to serve as mercenary soldiers under Juba, and had no fear of Caesar provided Cato was their leader; but it would be a terrible thing to be locked up in the town with these Uticans, unreliable Phoenicians as they were. Even if they were calm for the moment, they would surely play the traitor and join in with Caesar's attack as soon as he arrived. So, if anyone wanted to have the horsemen join him and fight as his comrades in battle, he would first have to drive out or kill all the people of Utica, and invite them into a town that was purged of enemies and barbarians.

Cato was appalled, and thought the proposal savage and barbaric; still, he responded calmly that he would go and consider matters

along with the three hundred. When he re-entered the city, he met men who were no longer making excuses or using delaying tactics – they had enough regard for him to stop doing that – but were frankly enraged at the notion that anyone should force them to fight Caesar when they had neither the capacity nor the will to do so. Some even made asides about the senators, saying that it would be a good idea to keep them in the city while Caesar was approaching, but Cato ignored these remarks and pretended not to hear. (And he was, in fact, a little deaf.) Then, however, someone came and reported that the horsemen were leaving. This made Cato afraid that the three hundred might do something desperate with the senators, and so he got up and left on foot with his friends. When he saw that the cavalry had already gone on ahead, he took a horse and galloped in their pursuit. They were glad to see him riding towards them, welcomed him warmly and encouraged him to secure his own safety along with theirs.³¹⁷ That was when they say Cato actually wept: he went and pleaded on the senators' behalf with outstretched hands, and even grabbed the weapons of some and twisted their horses around. Finally, he did persuade them to stay for at least that day in order to ensure that the senators could leave in safety.

64. On arriving back at the city with the horsemen, he stationed some at the gates and gave others the citadel to guard. At this the three hundred, afraid of punishment for their volte-face, sent to Cato and begged him, whatever else he might do, to come and talk to them; meanwhile the senators crowded round him, pleaded with him not to go to the three hundred, and said they would not abandon their protector and saviour to these faithless traitors. It would seem that this was the point where all alike in the city came to their clearest appreciation and admiration and love for Cato's virtue, seeing that there was no suggestion of anything deceptive or counterfeit in his actions. The man had long since taken the decision to kill himself, but undertook the most dreadful labours and anxieties and pains on others' behalf, so that he could bring them to safety before ending his life: for his determination to die was unmistakable, even though he did not express it in words.

He now did what the three hundred requested, after giving words of comfort to the senators, and went alone to meet them. The three hundred said how grateful they were to him for this, and begged him to trust them and to employ their services for the future in all other ways: but, if they were not Catos themselves and did not have his mental stature, he should take pity on their human weakness. They said that they had already decided to send to Caesar and make their pleas, but they would make these in particular and first of all for Cato

himself; and if Caesar refused, they would not accept any favour showed to themselves either, but would continue to fight for Cato as long as breath remained in their bodies. Cato replied by praising their goodwill, and told them to send pleas for their own safety as soon as possible, but not to include any for himself;³¹⁸ entreaties were the prerogative of the defeated, and pleas for mercy that of those who had done wrong. He himself had not merely remained undefeated all his life, but also even now was enjoying as much victory and superiority over Caesar as he wished – that is, in what was good and right. There, he told them, it was Caesar who was the conquered, captured and convicted, for those plots of his against his country that he had long denied were now exposed and on clear view.

65. That said, he left the three hundred. News now arrived that Caesar was already on his way with all his army:³¹⁹ Cato let out a cry: ‘So he thinks we are real men,’ he said; then he returned to the senators and told them not to delay but to secure their safety while the horsemen were still there. He closed off all the other gates except for the one leading to the sea; he distributed the boats to the men under his command and took care of the arrangements himself, stamping on any wrongdoing and calming any disturbance and giving money to the penniless out of his own pocket.

Then Marcus Octavius³²⁰ camped nearby at the head of two legions, and sent a message to Cato to come to an agreement on who should command. Cato made no answer to him directly but commented to his friends, ‘And now do we wonder why everything has been lost, when we see people still scrambling for office when on the very brink of their doom?’ And at this point he heard that the departing horsemen were already plundering and pillaging the Uticans’ possessions as if they were the spoils of war.³²¹ He rushed to them, met those at the front and took the spoils away. At that all the others tried to be the first to throw away and put down what they had taken, and all left in a shame-faced silence and with downcast faces.³²²

Cato now gathered the Uticans into the city and spoke to them on behalf of the three hundred, asking them not to stir up Caesar against them but to co-operate all together in seeking one another’s safety.³²³ Then he returned to the sea to supervise the embarkation, embracing and bidding farewell to those of his personal friends and guest-friends whom he could persuade to go. But he could not prevail on his son to take a boat, nor did he think it right to dissuade him when he wanted to stay with his father. There was a certain Statilius³²⁴ too, a young man but one with a firm resolve to be strong and to imitate Cato’s own resolution. Cato told him that he should sail, for he was quite evidently a hater of Caesar; when Statilius refused, Cato exchanged a

look with Apollonides the Stoic and Demetrius the Peripatetic,³²⁵ and said, 'It is a task for you two to work on this man's swollen head and get him to accommodate himself to what is expedient.' He himself saw the others on their way and gave money to those who needed it, and that occupied the whole of that night and most of the following day.

66. Lucius Caesar, a relative of Caesar himself and the man who was going to undertake the mission of pleading for the three hundred,³²⁶ asked Cato to suggest something plausible for him to say on their behalf. 'If it is for your sake, Cato,' he said, 'it would be a fine thing for me even to grasp Caesar's hands and fall at his knees.' But Cato would not let him do that. 'For my own part,' he said, 'if I had wanted to owe my life to Caesar's favour, it would have been up to me to go to him myself and see him alone. But I do not want to have to be grateful to the tyrant for his illegalities: and illegality is what it would be, to grant safety as if he were the master to people whom he has no right to rule. But as for the three hundred, let us, if you wish, consider together what you might say to secure their safety.' After discussing this with Lucius, he called in his son and his companions as Lucius was leaving;³²⁷ and after seeing him off and grasping his hand, he went home, and collecting together his son and his friends he spoke of many things. These included an instruction to his son not to engage in politics, for it was no longer possible to do so in a way worthy of Cato, and any other way was dishonourable.

As evening drew on, he went to the baths. As he was washing, he remembered Statilius, and let out a great cry: 'Apollonides,' he asked, 'did you shake Statilius out of his resolve, and see him go? And did the man sail without even bidding us farewell?' 'How could I possibly have managed that,' replied Statilius, 'despite all the time we spent in talking about it? No, the man is high-minded and cannot be persuaded: he says he is staying and doing whatever you do yourself.' At this, Cato smiled, so they say, and said, 'Well, it will soon be clear enough what that will be.'

67. After his bath, he dined with a large company, sitting up, just as he had been accustomed to do since the decisive battle, for he would only recline in order to sleep.³²⁸ All his companions and the magistrates of Utica dined with him. The after-dinner drinking took a cultivated and sophisticated turn, for there were various philosophical discussions going around, until the debate finally came round to the so-called 'Stoic paradoxes' – that the good person alone is free, that all those who are deficient are slaves. At that point, the Peripatetic³²⁹ predictably objected, and Cato spoke against him passionately: the intensity and violence of his language, as he pressed the argument to extreme lengths with extraordinary vehemence, left no one in any

doubt that he had determined to end his life and escape from the present predicament. For that reason a respectful silence fell upon all after he had finished speaking, but Cato then tried to revive their spirits and calm their suspicions by asking questions and making people think about the present: he showed that he was concerned for those who were at sea, and anxious too for those who were making their way on foot through a waterless desert in a savage land.

68. That was the mood in which he broke up the dinner, and he then went for his usual after-dinner walk with his friends and gave the guard-commanders the instructions appropriate to the circumstances. Then, as he was going off to his bedroom, he grasped and embraced his son and each of his friends more closely than usual, and that made them once again suspect what he was about to do. Going into his room and lying down,³³⁰ he took into his hands the Platonic dialogue *On the Soul*.³³¹ After he had read most of the book, he looked up and noticed that his sword was no longer hanging over his bed, for his son had removed it while he was still at dinner. He called a slave and asked who had taken it. The slave said nothing, and Cato turned his attention back to his book: he left a short interval, and then, just as if he were looking for the sword without any haste or urgency, told the slave to go and fetch it. The time passed and still no one brought it. He had finished the book by now, and he once again called the slaves in one by one, speaking more forcefully and demanding that the sword be brought back. He even struck one of them in the mouth and got blood on to his own hands, angrily shouting out at the top of his voice that his son and his servants were handing him over naked to his enemy. Finally his son ran into the room in tears, accompanied by the friends, and embraced him and pleaded with him mournfully. Cato got to his feet, gave him a fierce look and said, 'Can someone tell me when it was that I was convicted of being a half-wit, given that no one is telling me or trying to persuade me that my decision is a wrong one, but I am still prevented from doing as I wish, and have my weapon taken away? Why not also tie up your father, fine specimen of a son as you are, and bind his hands behind his back, until such time as Caesar arrives and finds me incapable even of defending myself? For I need no sword against myself, when it is possible to end one's life by just holding one's breath for a few minutes or smashing one's head a single time against the wall.'

69. As he said this the boy left, still crying, and all the others went too except for Demetrius and Apollonides. When these were the only ones left, he adopted a gentler tone, and asked, 'Have you two also decided to use force to stop a man of my age, and to sit there in silence as my warders? Or have you come to argue that there is nothing dreadful or

shameful if Cato, when there is no other hope of safety, should wait to have it granted by the enemy? Why not go further, and persuade me and teach me a new lesson, so that we can abandon those earlier doctrines and arguments by which we have lived our life, and become wiser thanks to Caesar, and be all the more grateful to him? Yet I have still not taken any decision about myself – but, once I have decided, I must insist on the power to follow the course of action I choose. I shall reach this decision in company with you yourselves, in a way, for I will be reaching it with the arguments that you too are accustomed to use. So go away in good heart, and tell my son not to impose on his father by force what he is unable to persuade him to do.’

70. Demetrius and Apollonides said nothing in reply, but quietly left in tears. A slave-boy was now sent in with the sword, and Cato took it, drew it from its scabbard, and tested its sharpness. When he saw that it still had its point and the edge was still sharp, ‘Now I am my own man,’ he said, and he put the sword down, then read the book again. And it is said that he read through the whole book twice.

Then he slept, and it was so deep a sleep that even those outside the room could hear him. Around midnight he called two freedmen, Cleanthes the doctor and Boutas,³³² a man he employed particularly for public business. He sent Boutas down to the sea to find out whether all had set sail and to report back; he asked the doctor to bandage his hand, which was inflamed by the blow that he had given the slave. That raised everyone’s spirits, as they thought it a sign that he was planning to live. Soon Boutas returned, reporting that all had sailed except Crassus,³³³ who was detained by some business, and he too would soon be departing; but there was a heavy storm and a strong wind at sea. When he heard this Cato gave a groan in pity for those who were sailing, and sent Boutas back to the sea with instructions to report back if anyone returned to port and needed anything vital.

Outside the birds were already singing, and Cato slept a little more. Then Boutas came back a second time, and told Cato that everything at the harbours was quiet. Cato now gave instructions to him to close the door, and returned to his bed, giving the impression that he would spend what was left of the night in sleep.

After Boutas had left, Cato drew the sword and stabbed himself below the breast. But he could not apply much force because of his inflamed hand, and so this did not immediately end his life: writhing in his death agony, he fell off the bed and knocked over a geometric abacus that was by the bedside. The noise this made alerted the servants, who raised a shout, and Cato’s son and friends immediately burst in. They saw him covered in blood, with most of his entrails

hanging out, but still alive and conscious. Everyone was appalled, and the doctor came to him and tried to replace the entrails, for they were intact, and to stitch up the wound: but Cato recovered enough to push the doctor away, then snatched the entrails apart with his hands and tore open the wound. And thus he died.³³⁴

71. Before one might have expected the news to spread even to the far parts of the house itself, the three hundred had collected at the doors, and a little later the people of Utica gathered too. With one voice they acclaimed him as their benefactor and saviour, the one man who was free and the one who was unconquered, and they did this even though word was coming that Caesar was on his way. Still, nothing could blunt their determination to honour Cato – not fear, not flattery of the conqueror, not their own internal differences and antagonism. They adorned his body splendidly, gave it a fine funeral and buried it by the sea at the spot where a statue now stands of Cato holding a sword. Then they turned their thoughts to the task of securing their own safety and that of the city.

72. Those coming to Caesar's camp had first brought the news that Cato was staying in Utica and not trying to escape, but was sending off the others while he himself, his companions and his son were moving around in the town without fear. On hearing that, Caesar found Cato's intentions hard to read (and it was Cato himself with whom he was most concerned), so pressed on with his army to reach the city. When news arrived of his death, he (so the story goes) said only: 'Cato, I begrudge you your death: for you begrudged me the granting of your life.' And indeed it is true that, if Cato had brought himself to accept safety from Caesar, he would not so much have disgraced his own reputation as added lustre to Caesar's. What in fact Caesar would have done is unclear: but, it being Caesar, people prefer the more favourable interpretation.³³⁵

73. Cato was forty-eight years old when he died. His son was unharmed by Caesar.³³⁶ It is said that this son was a lazy person, and was not beyond criticism in his treatment of women.³³⁷ There was a time in Cappadocia when the son was staying with a man called Marphadates, one of the royal family: Marphadates' wife was a beautiful woman, and he extended his stay there longer than was proper. He was mocked for this, and people would write:

Tomorrow Cato leaves – for thirty days have passed

and

for Marphadates' wife was called 'Soul'. And again:

Cato, so noble and splendid: for he has a royal Soul.

But any blots of this sort on his reputation were wiped out and vanished through the manner of his death. For he fought for freedom at Philippi against Caesar and Antony, and when the battle-line was forced back he refused to take flight or to remain inconspicuous, but challenged the enemy to approach, saying who he was and who was his father, and urging on those who would stay with him. There he fell, leaving his enemies full of admiration for his courage.³³⁸

Even more glorious was Cato's daughter,³³⁹ who did not fall short of him either in moral virtue or in masculine courage: for she was the wife of Brutus, the man who killed Caesar, and she too was part of that conspiracy and ended her own life in a way worthy of her family and her virtue. I have told of this in the *Brutus*.³⁴⁰

Statilius, the man who said he would do what Cato did, was prevented at the time by the philosophers from killing himself as he wished. Later he showed himself a most loyal and useful follower of Brutus, and it was at Philippi that he died.³⁴¹

BRUTUS

INTRODUCTION TO BRUTUS

Dion–Brutus formed the twelfth pair of the series of Parallel Lives (as Plutarch explicitly says at *Dion* 2), and so it belongs about half-way through the series. It is likely that Plutarch prepared *Brutus* as part of a broader project involving several other Lives (General Intro. III), including *Younger Cato*; and many of the themes of *Younger Cato* come back in this Life, especially the problems faced by a ‘philosopher’ who has to grapple with the uncomfortable looming reality of one-man rule. That is what underlies the pairing with Dion, the enthusiastic disciple of Plato and the brother-in-law of Dionysius II of Syracuse, who first tried with Plato’s help to turn Dionysius into a philosopher-king rather than a tyrant, and then, when that project turned sour, played a major part in Dionysius’s overthrow:

it is unlikely that either the Romans or the Greeks will find fault with the Academy, since in this book, which presents the Lives of Dion and of Brutus, each nation receives very similar treatment. Dion was a disciple of Plato who knew the philosopher personally, while Brutus was nurtured on his doctrines, so that both men were trained in the same wrestling school, one might say, to take part in the greatest of contests. There is a remarkable similarity in many of their actions, and so we should not be surprised that they often illustrate a particular conviction of their teacher in virtue, namely that power and good fortune must be accompanied by wisdom and justice if a man’s political actions are to be seen as noble as well as great. Hippomachus the trainer used to say that he could always pick out one of his pupils from afar off by the way he carried himself, even if he was only taking home some meat from the market-place, and in the same way it follows that when men have been educated then their principles should always attend their conduct and confer a certain grace, harmony and fitness upon all their actions.

(*Dion* 1)

‘A certain grace, harmony and fitness’: the emphasis falls on the way that *any* philosophers would behave, whatever their particular school, so that ‘when men have been educated’ it should be clear that their

actions have an underpinning of ethical principle. That is why Brutus, whose philosophical preferences were for the traditions of the Academy founded by Plato (ch. 2),¹ has so much in common with the Stoic Cato (see Intro. *Cato*). But the example of the trainer Hippomachus also suggests that he can recognize ‘his’ pupils, the ones that bear his individual stamp, and there are times in this pair when the particular philosophical school does matter. That is especially true in *Dion*, where the historical figure Plato plays a role: his conviction that a philosopher-king might be the best way of turning a state to health (*Dion* 11) is as important as his firm insistence on the distinction between monarchy and tyranny (e.g. *Dion* 10). In *Brutus* too there are times when particular doctrines are very much in point, for instance Statilius’s Epicurean reasons for staying out of the conspiracy (ch. 12)² and Cassius’s Epicurean interpretation of the vision that appeared to Brutus (ch. 37). Plutarch’s interest – in this Life as for instance in the essay *On the Daimonion of Socrates* – also falls on the way that, if a person’s philosophy is firmly founded, those ethical convictions can in their essentials survive the most adverse circumstances but may also change in important details. Thus Brutus has been taught by his experience that he was wrong to criticize Cato for taking his own life (ch. 40 and n. 223).

That insistence that philosophy and politics should interact, and that one should not apply doctrine too blindly and unreflectingly, is typical of Plutarch, and it was a theme of *Younger Cato*: that Life dwelt particularly on those moments when Cato’s refusal to compromise made matters worse (Intro. *Cato*). The wise politician does *not* behave as if he is living in Plato’s Republic (*Phoc.* 3, quoted in Intro. *Cato*). *Dion* too has prepared the reader for similar questions in this pair. Plato himself warned Dion to guard against ‘self-will, the inevitable concomitant of a solitary life’ at a time when Dion was treating discourteously those who might be able to help him (*Dion* 8, 52, quoting *Letter* 4.321b, which Plutarch at least took to be genuinely Platonic):³ compromises need to be made. Then in the closing chapters Dion’s friends show themselves shrewder than Dion himself in urging him to reject the blandishments of the unscrupulous Heraclides when he appeals to Dion’s high ethical principles (*Dion* 47–8), and Dion swiftly has to agree that they were right. Heraclides has to be executed after all (*Dion* 53).

All the more striking, then, that the narrative of *Brutus* itself tends not to highlight such issues. Brutus’s personal rigidity is stressed (chs. 6 with nn. 44–6, 8, 29, 35) and, particularly once the campaigning starts, there are certainly some indications that he was not always an easy colleague (chs. 34, 35); but, for instance, the clash of principle and practicality raised by the harshness of the Liberators’ money-

raising is only hinted at (chs. 30, 34), and it is left for Shakespeare to develop the moral issues in the quarrel scene of *Julius Caesar* (IV.3). Brutus himself is treated with an enthusiasm that is less qualified than with almost any other of Plutarch's heroes:

Brutus's virtues ... made him popular (so they say) with the rank and file, beloved by his friends, and admired by the nobility, while even his enemies found it impossible to hate him. He was a man of a singularly gentle nature and a lofty idealism, who stood unmoved by the temptations of anger, self-indulgence or greed, but was upright and inflexible in defence of what he thought honourable and just, so that the affection and reputation which he earned were based above all on the confidence which men felt in his principles. (*Brut.* 29)

Thus people had more confidence in him than in the devious and more self-interested Cassius (chs. 1 and n. 5, 29, *Comp. Dion–Brut.* 1), and this gives a running internal comparison of the two men that is regularly in Brutus's moral favour (chs. 7–9, 28 and n. 183, 29, 30, 32 and n. 192, 35), even if Cassius shows the greater political insight (ch. 20). That very rigidity of Brutus – so 'upright and inflexible' – is seen as a political strength, for it is this that made him so indispensable a figurehead for the conspirators (chs. 10, 13): there are none of the reservations here that marked a similar lack of compromise in Dion or in Cato. The blemish on his moral record, the sacking of Thessalonica and Sparta, is noted as the single exception to his normal style of conduct (ch. 46), and Plutarch notes that there was an element of necessity about it – and also that others behaved just as badly, but Brutus's style was such that people had come to expect so much better of him.

Nor does Plutarch treat other issues in such a way as to make them as ethically thought-provoking or problematic as we might expect, or as he might have done in other moods. The discussion of suicide in ch. 40 leaves the impression that Brutus, once he has changed his mind from his earlier condemnation of Cato, has now got things right, and that suggestion is confirmed by the proud words of Lucilius in ch. 50: 'When you find Brutus, whether he is alive or dead, he will be worthy of himself.' Elsewhere, Plutarch makes the morality of suicide seem much more difficult and complicated (for instance at *Cleom.* 31 or at *On Peace of Mind* 476a–b). Possibly even a more elaborate discussion could have vindicated Brutus's decision to kill himself in circumstances like these; but more elaborate discussion is what we do not get.

This does not mean, however, that Plutarch has abandoned his usual ethical depth. Moral issues are there, and the narrative gives the reader enough material to weigh them; but it is only in retrospect that

they are brought to the surface. The final *Comparison* is here even more important than usual, highlighting the biggest moral issue of all: were Brutus and Cassius *right* to strike Caesar down? That could be put in personal terms of ingratitude, which was the most usual way in antiquity of seeing the problem:⁴

The biggest charge they lay against Brutus is that he had been saved by Caesar's generosity, had also been allowed to save as many of his fellow-prisoners as he wanted, was thought to be his friend and favoured above many others, then became the murderer of his saviour. There is no such criticism that one could make of Dion.

(*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 3)

And Plutarch goes on there to debate this both ways: this in fact turns out to be the fulcrum point of the *Comparison*, where what is initially a point in Dion's favour – 'there is no such criticism that one could make of Dion' – is turned on its head to favour Brutus after all: 'Or is this the first point that tells the other way?' For Brutus, it follows, was inspired purely by principle, not by any private considerations, just as he was early in the *Life* when he laid aside his personal hostility to Pompey and supported him in the war (ch. 4).

There is a broader perspective as well. Brutus deserves credit for the *achievement* of removing Caesar, a far harder task than the elimination of the hated and despised Dionysius (*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 2). But was he right to do so? The sad state of Roman politics, a theme developed more in other *Lives* (e.g. *Caes.* 28, *Pomp.* 54, and many instances in the *Younger Cato's* narrative of the fifties BCE), suggests a different view:

Caesar's rule caused some considerable trouble for its opponents while it was being established, but once people had accepted it and been defeated it seemed no more than a name and a semblance, with no consequences that were cruel or tyrannical. Indeed, it seemed as if the circumstances were calling for monarchy, and Caesar was Heaven's own gift to Rome as the gentlest possible doctor.

(*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 2)

Yet we have had little of this in the narrative itself. It may be that the reservations that could be felt about Brutus's great deed were simply too great, too overwhelming, for them to be foregrounded continually as the story itself was told: if they had been, this would have distracted the reader from proper respect for the man's resolution and his high principles. But, taken together, the *Life* and the *Comparison* manage the remarkable balancing act of presenting a man who is both deeply admirable and, under the perspective of history, deeply wrong.⁵

Another element binding Dion and Brutus, as *Dion* 2 emphasizes,

was the way that both were confronted by strange visions as their death approached. There is contrast here as well as parallel. Dion's response was one of terror:

He started violently, and finding himself shaking with terror, he sent for his friends, described to them what he had seen and begged them to stay and spend the night with him, for he was almost beside himself with fear and was afraid that if he were left alone, the apparition might return.

(*Dion* 55)

Brutus's response was much calmer:

Summoning up his courage to question it, he asked, 'What man or god are you, and what do you want with me?' The phantom answered softly, 'I am your evil spirit, Brutus: you shall see me at Philippi.' Brutus remained calm and replied, 'I shall see you then.'

(*Brut.* 36)

And it is not till the next morning that he conveys to Cassius what has happened, and the two discuss it reflectively. Then the phantom reappears just before the battle (ch. 48), departing without a word. This self-control of Brutus is once again philosophically impressive: he is accepting whatever fortune may have in store for him. But it may also convey that Brutus is confronting not merely a human adversary but something more, especially as a mirroring supernatural intervention removes Octavian from the battle-line and ensures his survival (ch. 41). There may also have been some divine hand in the way that Brutus did not hear in time of his crucial naval success, so once again he is confronting more than his human adversaries:

But the day of the Republic was past, it would seem, and it was necessary that the rule of a single man should take its place, and so the gods, wishing to remove from the scene the only man who could hinder the potential master of the world, cut off any chance that the news might reach Brutus in time, although it came very close to doing so.

(*Brut.* 47)

'The potential master of the world': that is clearly Octavian, and this is one of several deft touches towards the end of the narrative which hint at what is to come, not merely the elimination of Brutus and Cassius but also the way that Antony will become the next victim and Octavian will emerge as the unrivalled master at the end (nn. 244, 251, 253, 261). The *Comparison* has some similar touches too (n. 19). The final story is a particularly fine and suggestive touch. This has Octavian, by now the emperor Augustus, teasing the nervous citizens of Milan over their statue of Brutus: are they harbouring 'his enemy' (*Comp. Dion-Brut.* 5)? He ends with a smile, and gives instructions

that the statue should remain. That captures not only the respect that Brutus commanded even from an enemy but also the tranquillity that now rules, with the cause for which Brutus gave his life now so much a thing of the past. Old animosities are no longer relevant: they have become a matter for teasing, not for vindictiveness. The magnanimity of the victor emphasizes the completeness of his victory as well as the qualities he respected in the man who lost.

Plutarch clearly had access to particularly lavish source material for this Life. There continues to be close contact with the account of Appian, though there are also important variations in detail even when the two versions overlap, and it is sometimes hard to say which of the two authors has done the adapting (see nn. 220, 236, 243, 252); the contact suggests that Plutarch was continuing to draw heavily on Asinius Pollio (General Intro. III). Still, there is an unusual amount of material that seems to come from other sources,⁶ and – again as with *Younger Cato* – much of it suggests the rich tradition that sprang up around the Republican hero himself. In ch. 2 Plutarch mentions the orator Empylus,⁷ ‘who has left a short but valuable book on Caesar’s assassination entitled *Brutus*’: in ch. 13, Plutarch notes that Brutus’s stepson Bibulus ‘later wrote a small book of *Memoirs of Brutus*, which is still extant’ (*Brut.* n. 85). Both notices may be taken as signals that Plutarch knows both works, and he cites Bibulus at ch. 23 for some moving detail of the parting of Cato and his wife Porcia; Porcia was Bibulus’s mother, and it is an easy guess that the other striking material on Porcia (chs. 13, 15, 53), dwelling as it does on her admirable qualities, deep affection and extraordinary death, is also owed to those *Memoirs* of her son. Philippi too was well covered by the men of words in Brutus’s circle, and it will be no coincidence that the amount of non-Appianic material is greater once the Philippi campaign is under way. ‘Messala’ – i.e. M. Valerius Messala Corvinus, later a considerable figure under Augustus – wrote his *Memoirs*, and is cited several times in the final chapters (40, 42, 45) and has a prominent role in the account of the fighting (40, 41, 45); he also figures in the final chapter for an item about Octavian (53), and here too the naming may be a pointer to him as source. In those final chapters Plutarch also quotes ‘Publius Volumnius, who was a philosopher and who had served with Brutus in all his campaigns’, for some details given in chapters 48 and 51; as the suicide draws near Volumnius himself is a figure in the narrative (chs. 51–2), and again he presumably was the one who told the story.

One further important source is Brutus himself, for both Greek and Latin letters of his survived (though the Greek at least were of dubious authenticity): Plutarch cites them in a way that suggests first-hand knowledge (chs. 2 and nn. 22 and 24, 21 and n. 131, 28 and n. 181,

29 and n. 187), though he also conveys the doubt about their genuineness (53 and n. 266).⁸ He also knew (perhaps from reading at the time that he was writing the earlier *Cicero*)⁹ some letters of Cicero himself (chs. 6 and n. 44, 22 and nn. 137–8, 24 and n. 150), and also the *Memoirs* of Octavian (chs. 27, 41 and n. 226).

Brutus, together with *Caesar* and a small amount of *Antony*, was one of Shakespeare's major sources for *Julius Caesar*, and presented a different problem of dramatic recasting from those he faced for *Antony and Cleopatra* and for *Coriolanus*. In those other cases Shakespeare was adapting a single Life for each play, whereas for *Julius Caesar* he was welding Lives with different interests and emphases, with Plutarch narrating the assassination from Caesar's viewpoint in the final chapters of *Caesar* and turning to the conspirators' side in *Brutus*. The techniques Shakespeare uses are too intricate to analyse here,¹⁰ but an important strand is the notion of continuity as 'the tide of times' (III.1.257) brings back related themes first in Caesar's fate and then in Brutus's. Caesar's spirit hangs over the second half of the play – indeed seems fused with Brutus's own 'evil spirit' in the phantom scene¹¹ – just as the spirit of the dead Pompey is often felt in the first half; and with both Caesar and Brutus we may sense a contrast between some inner, personal frailty or vulnerability and the grand task laid upon the man by his name and his destiny. Shakespeare's Brutus steals from Portia's bed, and she pleads with him on her knees; his Caesar, in his night-gown, faces the pleas of the kneeling Calpurnia, and in each case the domestic scene shows a wife who can penetrate to an inner uncertainty; in each case, though, the public figure must go forth and put those uncertainties aside. Shakespeare's characterization is often different from that of Plutarch, for instance in his shrewd and manipulative Antony and in his brooding and humourless Cassius; but his Brutus is still identifiably the same as in Plutarch, with a magnificent and dominant force of public personality that is difficult to resist, even or especially when he is wrong. Shakespeare's Brutus, however, is more outraged by what Caesar might become than what he is already (II.1.10–34), something that tilts the moral issue towards the rights and wrongs of regicide rather than to any question of ingratitude. Shakespeare's stage is finally dominated by the young Caesar, Octavian: that is one of the hints of the future that looms, and here again Shakespeare's themes can be seen as a response to something already in Plutarch.

BRUTUS

[85–42 BCE]

1. Marcus Brutus was a descendant of that Junius Brutus in whose honour the ancient Romans erected a statue of bronze and placed it in the midst of the kings.¹ They represented him with a drawn sword in his hand in memory of the way that he had dethroned the Tarquins for once and for all. But the first Brutus possessed a character as unyielding as a sword made of cold-tempered steel.² A hard man by nature, his disposition had never been humanized by education, and so his anger against the tyrants could even drive him to the terrible extremity of killing his own sons.³ By contrast, the Brutus who is the subject of this Life took pains to moderate his character by means of the culture and reasoning powers that philosophy gives,⁴ while he also exerted himself to stir up the steadier and milder side of his nature and force it into action, with the result that his temperament was almost ideally balanced to pursue a life of virtue. So we find that even those men who hated him most for his conspiracy against Julius Caesar were prepared to give the credit for any nobility in the deed to Brutus, while they blamed all the worse features upon Cassius, who, though a relative and close friend of Brutus, was neither so simple a character nor so disinterested in his motives.⁵

Brutus's mother Servilia traced her descent from Servilius Ahala,⁶ who, when Spurius Maelius was plotting to secure the support of the people so as to make himself tyrant, took a dagger under his arm,⁷ went into the forum, and, walking up to Maelius as if he were about to start a conversation, chose his moment when the man inclined his head to listen, and then stabbed him to death.⁸

So much is generally admitted; but as for his ancestry on his father's side,⁹ the people who bear him most hatred and ill will on account of Caesar's murder¹⁰ argue that it cannot possibly be traced back to the Brutus who drove out the Tarquins, because after he had killed his sons he was left without issue. According to them, Marcus Brutus was descended from a plebeian house of the same name, which had only recently produced men who held office.¹¹ On the other hand, Posidonius the philosopher¹² maintains that the grown-up sons of Brutus died in the way that has been narrated,¹³ but that there was a third son as well, an infant, who survived,¹⁴ and the family thereafter

derived its lineage from him. What is more, he mentions that there were a number of distinguished men of this house who were alive in his own day who remarked on their physical resemblance to the statue of Brutus.¹⁵ So much for this subject.

2. Brutus's mother Servilia was a sister of Cato the philosopher.¹⁶ This was the man whom Brutus admired more than any other Roman, and in due course his uncle also became his father-in-law.¹⁷ There was practically no Greek philosopher with whom Brutus was unacquainted or whom he found unsympathetic, but it was the followers of Plato who attracted him most of all.¹⁸ He found little to attract him in the theories of the New or Middle Academy, as they are called, but devoted himself mainly to the Old.¹⁹ He was therefore always an admirer of Antiochus of Ascalon,²⁰ whose brother Aristus he had made his close friend and companion. This was a man less eloquent than many philosophers, but one who in his well-ordered and mild-mannered disposition was equal to the best.²¹ As for Empylus, who is often mentioned by Brutus in his letters²² and by his friends as one of his companions, he was an orator, who has left a short but valuable book on Caesar's assassination entitled *Brutus*.²³

In Latin Brutus was well trained as a forensic orator and able to give elaborate expositions, but when he expressed himself in Greek he adopted an epigrammatic and 'Laconic' brevity, and he gives some distinctive examples of this from time to time in his letters.²⁴ For instance, when he had taken the field in the war he wrote to the people of Pergamum:²⁵ 'I hear you have given money to Dolabella.²⁶ If you did this willingly, admit that you are in the wrong; if you did it unwillingly, prove it by giving willingly to me.' On another occasion²⁷ he wrote to the Samians: 'Your thinking is contemptuous. Your contributions are late. Where do you think this will end?' And in another letter: 'The Xanthians, by rejecting my kindnesses, have made their country into the graveyard of their folly. The Patareans, by trusting themselves to me, enjoy complete freedom to manage their own affairs. You have the opportunity to choose the judgement of the Patareans or the fate of the Xanthians.'²⁸ This is the style which makes his letters distinctive.

3. While he was still a young man, he accompanied his uncle Cato to Cyprus on the expedition to deal with Ptolemy.²⁹ After Ptolemy had committed suicide, Cato, who was detained by business in Rhodes, sent one of his friends named Canidius to take charge of the king's treasure;³⁰ but, since he did not trust Canidius's honesty, he wrote to his nephew ordering him to sail immediately for Cyprus from Pamphylia, where Brutus was recovering from a severe illness. Brutus set out with a good deal of reluctance: this was partly out of regard for

Canidius, whom he felt had been ignominiously discarded, and partly because he took the view, youthful intellectual as he was, that a task that demanded such minute attention to business was a mean occupation and one that was unworthy of himself. However, he exerted himself so effectively that he was highly praised by Cato, and, after he had seen the king's property converted into money, he had the bulk of the treasure shipped with him and brought to Rome.³¹

4. When it came to civil war,³² with Pompey and Caesar taking up arms against one another, and the whole empire thrown into confusion, it was generally expected that Brutus would choose Caesar's side, for his father had been put to death at Pompey's orders some years before.³³ But Brutus believed that he ought to put the public good before his private loyalties, and as he was convinced that Pompey's cause was the better one he attached himself to his side. He did this in spite of the fact that previously he had refused to exchange a word with Pompey when he met him, since he regarded it as a great abomination if he were to exchange a word with the murderer of his father. But in the present situation he accepted Pompey as the leader of his country, and so he put himself under his orders and sailed for Cilicia as legate to Sestius,³⁴ who had been allocated this province. However, since he found no opportunity there to achieve anything worthwhile, and since Pompey and Caesar were now taking up their positions for the decisive battle, he travelled to Macedonia to share the danger voluntarily. It is said that Pompey was so surprised and delighted that he rose from his seat as Brutus approached, and in front of everyone embraced him as though Brutus were his superior. During this campaign, whenever he was not in Pompey's company during the daytime, he would devote himself to intellectual discussion and reading, not only in the weeks that led up to Pharsalus but on the very eve of the great battle.³⁵ It was then the height of summer, and the heat was overpowering, especially as Pompey's army was encamped near a marsh,³⁶ and the soldiers who carried Brutus's tent were slow in arriving. He was exhausted by the lack of shade, but although it was almost noon before he had anointed himself and taken a little food, he spent the time until the evening – when his companions were either sleeping or brooding anxiously about the future – writing out a summary of Polybius.

5. Caesar too is said to have been concerned for Brutus's safety, so much so that he gave orders to his commanders that Brutus must on no account be killed in the fighting, but his life must be spared. If he gave himself up, he was to be taken prisoner, but if he resisted capture they were not to offer him violence but let him go. All this, it is believed, Caesar did for the sake of Brutus's mother, Servilia. It seems

that in Caesar's youth he had an affair with Servilia, who was madly in love with him, and as Brutus had been born at about the time when her passion was its height he had been convinced that Brutus was his own son.³⁷ The story goes that when the great Catiline affair, which had come near to overturning the state, had been brought before the senate,³⁸ Cato and Caesar, who were opposing one another in the debate, were standing close to one another. Just then a note was brought in and handed to Caesar, which he read without saying anything. At this Cato shouted out that Caesar was acting outrageously in receiving communications from the enemies of the state. This created an uproar, whereupon Caesar handed the note just as it was to Cato, who read it only to discover that it was a love-letter from his sister Servilia. Cato hurled it back at Caesar, crying, 'Take it, you drunken oaf!' and then he returned to the debate. So notorious was Servilia's passion for Caesar.

6. After the defeat at Pharsalus, Pompey made his own escape by sea, but the camp was besieged. Meanwhile, Brutus slipped out by a gate into a nearby swamp, which was waterlogged and covered with reeds, and after travelling through the night he arrived safely in Larissa. From there he wrote to Caesar, who was delighted to hear that he was safe, and invited Brutus to join him. Later Caesar not only pardoned him, but treated him as one of the most honoured members of his circle.³⁹ At this moment nobody could give any account of the direction in which Pompey had fled, and since there was such uncertainty Caesar took a walk alone with Brutus and sounded him on the subject. Some of the arguments which he put forward convinced Caesar that Brutus's ideas concerning Pompey's movements came nearest to the truth,⁴⁰ and so he put aside all other possibilities and hurried towards Egypt. And Pompey had indeed landed in Egypt, as Brutus had guessed, and there he met his fate.⁴¹

Brutus even succeeded in allaying Caesar's anger against his friend Cassius.⁴² He also spoke up for Deiotarus king of Galatia,⁴³ and although the weight of the charges against his client was more than he could overcome, still his appeals for clemency were so convincing that he saved a great part of his kingdom for him. It is said that when Caesar first heard Brutus speaking in public, he remarked to his friends: 'I do not know what this young man wants, but everything that he wants, he wants very badly.'⁴⁴ For the steadiness of his character and the fact that he could not easily be persuaded to give his support to anyone who sought it as a personal favour, but acted only upon due reflection and a moral choice based on practical reasoning,⁴⁵ made his efforts powerful and effective in whatever cause he undertook. No amount of flattery could induce him to grant an

unjust petition, and he considered that to give way to shameless importunity, which some people regard as an act of diffident respect for others,⁴⁶ was a most disgraceful weakness in a great man; indeed he used to say that in his opinion those who could refuse nothing must have been corrupted in their youth.

When Caesar was about to set out for his campaign against Cato and Scipio in Africa,⁴⁷ he chose Brutus to be governor of Cisalpine Gaul,⁴⁸ an appointment that proved to be a stroke of good fortune for the province. While the peoples of the other provinces were plundered and treated with as much arrogance and greed by their governors as if they had been conquered in war,⁴⁹ Brutus brought such relief to the Gauls that they felt consoled not only for their present but even for their earlier misfortunes. What is more, he gave Caesar the credit for all of this, so that when, after his return, the dictator made a tour of Italy,⁵⁰ he was as delighted to see the contentment of the cities as he was by the behaviour of Brutus himself, who neglected nothing that could enhance his prestige and proved to be a most agreeable companion.

7. At this time there were a number of praetorships vacant,⁵¹ and it was expected that the one that carried the greatest dignity, the urban praetorship, would be conferred upon Brutus or Cassius. According to some accounts this circumstance increased the disharmony between the two men when they already had some mild causes for dispute themselves (and this was despite the fact that they were closely related, for Cassius had married Junia, one of Brutus's sisters⁵²). There are others, however, who say that this rivalry had been brought about by Caesar, who had secretly led on each man by hinting at his support, until with this measure of encouragement they found themselves in competition with one another.⁵³ Brutus's case rested on his reputation and his virtue; against this Cassius could point to his many brilliant endeavours during Crassus's campaign against the Parthians.⁵⁴ However, when Caesar had listened to each man's claims and was discussing the affair with his friends, he summed it up by saying: 'Cassius has the stronger case, but we must give the first praetorship to Brutus.'⁵⁵ Cassius was appointed to another praetorship, but he was more resentful about the post he had lost than grateful for the one he received.

There were other ways too in which Brutus shared as much of Caesar's power as he wished. Indeed, had he chosen to do so, he might easily have become the most influential of all Caesar's friends and exercised the greatest authority, but his association with Cassius led him away from such a course. After their contest for office he was not yet personally reconciled with Cassius; however, he listened to his

friends who were constantly warning him that he must not allow himself to be charmed or softened up by Caesar, but make a point of refusing a tyrant's generosity and favours, since these were designed not to honour his virtue but to emasculate his vigour and undermine his spirit.

8. On the other hand, Caesar was not without his suspicions of Brutus, and indeed there was no lack of informers against him, but while he feared Brutus's lofty spirit, his reputation and his friends, he still had great faith in his character. When he was told that Mark Antony and Dolabella were plotting something revolutionary,⁵⁶ he remarked, 'It is not these fat, long-haired fellows who bother me, but the pale and thin ones,'⁵⁷ by whom he meant Brutus and Cassius. And again when various people were making accusations against Brutus and urging Caesar to be on his guard against him, he raised his hand to touch his body and asked, 'What? Do you imagine that Brutus cannot wait for this poor flesh to end its days?'⁵⁸ so much as to say that no one but Brutus was fitted to succeed to such great power.

And indeed it seems that Brutus could easily have become the first man in Rome beyond any dispute,⁵⁹ if he had had the patience to take second place to Caesar for a time and wait for his power to pass its zenith and the glory of his achievements to fade. But it was Cassius with his violent temper and his hatred of Caesar – he was indeed personally anti-Caesar more than politically anti-tyrant – who inflamed Brutus's feelings and urged him on. Brutus, it is said, was opposed to Caesar's rule, but Cassius hated the ruler, and among other grievances which he brought up against him was the matter of the removal of the lions, which Cassius had procured when he was going to take office as aedile.⁶⁰ These animals had been left at Megara, and when the city was captured by Calenus,⁶¹ Caesar appropriated them for himself. They are said to have brought disaster to Megara, because when the city was on the point of being captured the Megarians broke open the cages and unchained them, hoping that they would attack the enemy as they entered the city. But instead of this the lions turned on the unarmed Megarians and tore them to pieces as they ran to and fro in terror, so that even their enemies were overcome with pity at the sight.

9. People say that Cassius's resentment at this affair was his principal motive in organizing the conspiracy, but that is unfair. From his very earliest days, Cassius was inspired by a peculiar bitterness and animosity towards the whole tribe of tyrants, and he revealed this even as a boy, when he went to the same school as Faustus, the son of Sulla.⁶² When Faustus began to throw his weight about among the other boys and boast of his father's absolute power,⁶³ Cassius jumped

up and gave him a thrashing. Faustus's guardians⁶⁴ and relatives wanted to take the matter to court, but Pompey refused to allow this, brought the two boys together and questioned them as to what had happened. Thereupon Cassius said, so the story goes, 'Come on then, Faustus, you can tell Pompey, if you dare, what you said that made me so angry, and I will knock your teeth in again.'

Such was Cassius's character. But in Brutus's case, it was not merely the arguments of his personal friends, but a whole succession of hints and written appeals that challenged him and urged him on. For example, a graffito appeared on the statue of his ancestor, that Junius Brutus who had overthrown the rule of the kings,⁶⁵ which read, 'We wish we had you now, Brutus!', and 'Would that Brutus were alive'. And the tribunal upon which he sat as praetor would be found in the morning covered with writings that read 'Brutus, you are asleep',⁶⁶ or 'You are no true Brutus'. Many of these outbursts of popular feeling were brought about by the actions of Caesar's flatterers, who, among the other invidious honours that they devised for him, went so far as to have diadems placed on his statues by night, in the hope that the people might be persuaded to salute him as king instead of dictator. But their efforts produced exactly the opposite effect to what was intended, as I have described in detail in *Caesar*.⁶⁷

10. Now, when Cassius sounded out his friends about forming a conspiracy against Caesar, they all agreed to join him on condition that Brutus became their leader. Mere numbers or daring, they were convinced, were not enough. What the enterprise really needed was the reputation of a man such as this, whose presence would, as it were, consecrate the victim and guarantee the justice of the sacrifice⁶⁸ by the mere fact of his participation. Without him they would act with less conviction in carrying out the deed, and would attract more suspicion afterwards, since men would say that if their cause had been just then Brutus would not have refused to support it. Cassius saw the force of these arguments, and accordingly took the initiative in paying Brutus the first visit since the quarrel which I have already described. Then, as soon as they had made up their differences and exchanged friendly greetings, he asked Brutus whether he had decided to attend the meeting of the senate which was due to be held on the Kalends of March,⁶⁹ for he had heard that Caesar's friends intended on that day to put forward the idea of declaring him a king. When Brutus answered that he would not go, Cassius went on, 'Then what if they send for us?' 'In that case,' Brutus answered, 'it would be my duty not to remain silent, but to defend my country and to die for its liberty.' Cassius was encouraged by this answer and asked him: 'But do you think there is a single Roman who will allow you to die for them like

this? Do you know nothing about yourself, Brutus? Do you think that all these appeals that have been scrawled over your tribunal were put there by weavers or shopkeepers, and not by the foremost men in Rome? They look to the other praetors for public doles and theatrical spectacles and gladiatorial shows, but they look to you to deliver them from tyranny. They count on this as a debt which you owe to your ancestry, and they are ready to suffer anything for your sake if you show yourself the man they believe and expect you to be.’⁷⁰ He ended by throwing his arms around Brutus and embracing him, and after they had been reconciled in this way they returned to their friends.

11. There was a man called Quintus Ligarius,⁷¹ who had been denounced as one of Pompey’s supporters but had been pardoned by Caesar. Ligarius, so far from feeling any gratitude for this acquittal, was full of resentment at the power which had put his life in danger: he hated Caesar and was one of the circle of Brutus’s closest friends. Brutus paid him a visit one day when he was sick, and remarked, ‘Oh Ligarius, what a time this is to take to your bed!’ Ligarius immediately raised himself on to his elbow, grasped Brutus’s hand and declared, ‘No, Brutus, if your thinking is worthy of yourself, I am well enough.’

12. After this they secretly sounded the attitude of a number of other prominent Romans in whom they had confidence. They did not confine themselves to their own circle of friends, but approached all whom they knew to be men of courage and to have no fear of death.⁷² For this reason they did not take Cicero into their confidence, even though there was nobody whom they trusted more or who was better disposed towards them. They were afraid that his natural timidity, combined with the caution that time and old age had laid upon him, and his insistence on eliminating the smallest element of risk from any plan, would blunt the edge of their resolution at a time when speed would be essential.⁷³ Among his other friends Brutus also passed over Statilius the Epicurean,⁷⁴ and Favonius, the man who was besotted with Cato.⁷⁵ The reason for this was that he had tested their attitude a little while before by the roundabout method of a philosophical discussion. Favonius had replied that a civil war was a greater evil than an illegal monarchy,⁷⁶ while Statilius declared that a man of sense and judgement ought not to plunge himself into mental turmoil or physical danger for the sake of insignificant and unthinking people.⁷⁷ However, Labeo,⁷⁸ who was also present, opposed both these points of view. For his part Brutus kept quiet while this argument was in progress, on the grounds that this was a complicated question and difficult to decide, but later on he confided his plans to Labeo, who was enthusiastic and agreed to join him. After this it was also decided to invite the other Brutus, Brutus Albinus.⁷⁹ This man was not

particularly vigorous or brave, but he was important to the conspirators because of the numbers of gladiators whom he was keeping at Rome in preparation for a public show, and he also commanded Caesar's confidence. When he was sounded by Cassius and Labeo, he declined to give an immediate answer, but later he had a private interview with Brutus, and as soon as he discovered he was the leader of the enterprise he readily agreed to join. Most of the remainder, and certainly those of most consequence, were likewise attracted by Brutus's reputation. And although they took no oath nor exchanged any sacred pledges to guarantee their loyalty, they succeeded so well in keeping the secret among themselves that in spite of the various divine warnings which appeared in the form of prophecies, prodigies and sacrificial omens, the idea of a conspiracy was found unbelievable.⁸⁰

13. Brutus had now reached a point at which the safety of many of the leading citizens of Rome – the men most prominent for their ancestry, their resolution and their personal qualities – depended upon him. And since he was well aware of the danger which this involved, he strove, at any rate in public, to keep his plans strictly to himself and his thoughts under control, but at home and especially at night he was no longer the same man. Sometimes his misgivings would make him start up involuntarily out of his sleep, and at other moments, when he was more than ever immersed in his thoughts and brooding over his difficulties, it became clear to his wife, as she lay by his side, that he was weighed down by some unusual anxiety and was turning over in his mind some difficult and intricate plan.

Porcia, as I have mentioned above,⁸¹ was one of Cato's daughters. She had married Brutus, who was her cousin, when she was still very young,⁸² although she was by then already a widow,⁸³ and had by her first husband a little son, whose name was Bibulus.⁸⁴ He later wrote a small book of *Memoirs of Brutus*, which is still extant.⁸⁵ Porcia, who loved her husband deeply and was not only of an affectionate nature but full of spirit and good sense, did not press her husband to reveal his secrets until she had put herself to a test. She dismissed her maidservants from her room, and then taking a little knife such as barbers use to cut finger-nails, she gave herself a deep gash in the thigh. She lost a great quantity of blood, after which the wound became intensely painful and brought on fits of shivering and a high fever. When she was in great pain and saw that Brutus was deeply distressed for her, she said to him: 'Brutus, I am Cato's daughter, and I was given to you in marriage not just to share your bed and board like a concubine, but to be a partner in your joys and a partner in your sorrows. I have no reproach to make to you about our marriage, but

what proof of my love can I give you, or what joy can we share, if you forbid me to share the kind of trouble that demands a loyal friend to confide in, and keep your suffering and your thoughts to yourself? I know that women's natures are thought to be too weak to be entrusted with secrets, but surely a good upbringing and the company of honourable people can do much to strengthen our characters, and Porcia can also claim that she is the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus. I was not so confident before that either of these blessings could help me, but now I have come to know myself and find that I can conquer pain.'⁸⁶ At this she showed him her wound and explained what she had done. Brutus was amazed and lifting up his hands to heaven he prayed to the gods to help him to succeed in his enterprise and show that he was a husband worthy of Porcia. After that he did bring his wife back into his confidence.

14. A meeting of the senate was now announced which it was expected Caesar would attend, and the conspirators agreed to seize this opportunity for their attempt. The occasion would enable them to muster their full strength without attracting suspicion; what was more, they would have all the men of the highest rank and character in the Republic assembled in one place, and these, they hoped, would immediately embrace the cause of liberty once they saw a great deed had been accomplished.⁸⁷ Besides, the very place of the meeting seemed to have been chosen by providence so as to favour their purpose, for the session was to be held in one of the porticoes adjoining the theatre and containing a hall furnished with a number of benches in which stood a statue of Pompey. This had been erected at the public expense in Pompey's honour, when he had adorned that quarter of the city with the porticoes and the theatre.⁸⁸ Here the senate was summoned for its meeting in the middle of March – the Romans call the day the 'Ides of March'⁸⁹ – and it seemed that some divine power was drawing Caesar to the place to meet his punishment for the death of Pompey.

When the day arrived, Brutus put on a dagger, unknown to anybody except his wife, and went out. The rest of the conspirators met at Cassius's house and accompanied his son to the forum, for the boy was due on that day to put on his manly gown or *toga virilis*,⁹⁰ as the Romans call it. From there they all hurried to Pompey's portico, where they waited, expecting that Caesar would arrive immediately for the meeting of the senate. It was at this moment, above all, that anybody who knew what was about to happen would have been amazed at the unshakeable calm and presence of mind which these men displayed as the moment of crisis drew near. As praetors they were obliged by virtue of their office to transact business for many

people who came before them, and they not only listened patiently to every application or dispute, as if they had no other preoccupation in the world, but they took infinite pains to pronounce an exact and considered judgement upon every case. And when one of the litigants refused to accept Brutus's verdict, and began to protest loudly and to appeal to Caesar, Brutus looked round to the bystanders and declared, 'Caesar does not prevent me from acting in accordance with the laws, nor will he do so in future.'

15. At the same time there were many surprising happenings to upset their composure. First of all, although it was growing late, Caesar had still failed to arrive.⁹¹ The sacrificial victim had been pronounced unfavourable, so that he was kept at home by his wife and forbidden to go out by the soothsayers.⁹² Next, a man walked up to Casca,⁹³ one of the conspirators, took him by the hand and remarked: 'You kept this a secret from us, Casca, but Brutus has told me everything!' As Casca stood there speechless, the other laughed and said, 'You must tell me, my dear fellow, how you made a fortune so quickly that you are shaping up to stand for the aedileship!' Another moment, and because of the ambiguity of the man's words, Casca would have let out the secret of the conspiracy. About the same time Brutus and Cassius were greeted more effusively than usual by one of the senators, Popilius Laenas,⁹⁴ who whispered to them, 'My prayers are with you. May your plan succeed, but whatever you do, make haste. Word of it has got out.' Then he walked away, leaving them full of suspicion that the plot had been discovered.

At this moment too a messenger came running from Brutus's house with the news that his wife was dying.⁹⁵ Porcia had been almost beside herself at the thought of what was going to happen. She found herself overwhelmed by the weight of her anxiety and could hardly bear to sit indoors. Every noise or cry would make her start up suddenly like a woman possessed with the Bacchic frenzy, and she would ask everyone who came from the forum what Brutus was doing; and meanwhile she sent messenger after messenger to learn the news. As the day dragged on her strength sank lower and lower and at last, as her feeling of helplessness got too much to bear, it deserted her utterly. There was no time for her to reach her room before suddenly, sitting as she was among her servants, she was seized by an overpowering faintness and stupor, her colour vanished and she could not utter a word. Her maids shrieked aloud at the sight, her neighbours came running in a crowd to the door and the rumour soon spread far and wide that she was dead. However, under the care of her women she revived after a little, and her senses returned. Brutus was deeply affected by the sudden news, as was natural enough, but

he did not forget his public duty, nor did he allow his anxiety to make his thoughts drift to his private concerns.

16. And now the news arrived that Caesar was on his way, carried in a litter. He had been discouraged by the unfavourable omens, and had decided not to settle any important business on that day but to postpone it on the pretext of being indisposed.⁹⁶ As he stepped down from his litter, Popilius Laenas hurried up to him – the very man who not long before had wished Brutus success with his plans – and spoke for a few moments while Caesar stood and listened to him. The conspirators, as I shall now call them,⁹⁷ could not hear what he was saying, but their suspicions naturally made them conclude that the object of Laenas's conversation was to warn Caesar of the plot. Their spirits sank, and in the glances that passed between them they silently agreed that they should not wait to be arrested, but should die by their own hands. Cassius and some of the others were already clutching the hilts of their daggers beneath their robes and were on the point of drawing them, when Brutus noticed that Laenas's whole manner suggested that he was urging a petition, not making an accusation. Brutus did not utter a word, because he was surrounded by strangers who knew nothing of the plot, but he succeeded by the cheerfulness of his expression in reassuring Cassius and his friends. Then, after a little while Laenas kissed Caesar's hand and took his leave, and it was clear that his interview with Caesar was concerned with some personal matter of his own.

17. After the senators had entered the debating chamber ahead of Caesar, the rest of the conspirators grouped themselves around Caesar's chair, as if they were about to present a petition to him, while Cassius is said to have turned towards Pompey's statue and uttered a prayer to it, as though it could hear his words.⁹⁸ At the same time Trebonius⁹⁹ engaged Mark Antony in conversation by the door and kept him outside.¹⁰⁰ When Caesar entered, the whole senate rose in his honour, but as soon as he was seated the conspirators crowded around his chair, and brought forward Tillius Cimber¹⁰¹ to plead on behalf of his brother who had been banished. The others all supported this appeal and went on to clasp Caesar's hands¹⁰² and kiss his breast and his head. At first he simply refused their petition, but then when they would not let him go, he tried to rise and shake them off by force. Thereupon Tillius wrenched Caesar's robe off his shoulders with both hands, while Casca, who was standing behind him, drew his dagger and gave him the first stab, wounding him slightly near the shoulder. Caesar grasped the handle of his dagger and shouted loudly in Latin, 'Casca, you villain, what are you doing?' while Casca, speaking in Greek, called out to his brother to help him.¹⁰³ By this

time Caesar found himself being attacked from every side, and as he glanced around to see if he could force a way through his attackers, he saw Brutus closing in upon him with his dagger drawn.¹⁰⁴ At this he let go of Casca's hand which he had seized, muffled up his head in his robe and yielded up his body to his murderers' blows. Then the conspirators flung themselves upon him with such a frenzy of violence,¹⁰⁵ as they hacked away with their daggers, that they even wounded one another. Brutus received a stab in the hand¹⁰⁶ as he tried to play his part in the slaughter, and every one of them was drenched in blood.

18. That is how Caesar died. Brutus now stepped into the midst of the debating chamber and did his best to reassure the senators and persuade them to stay, but they took to their heels in confusion and crowded panic-stricken through the doors, even though nobody made any move to pursue them. For it had been firmly decided that one man and one only was to be killed, and the rest of the people were to be invited to take up their liberty. When they discussed the execution of their plan, all the other conspirators had wanted to kill Mark Antony as well as Caesar. They regarded him as a man of violence, who favoured autocratic rule and had acquired great power through his ability to mix familiarly with his soldiers; and they were particularly worried because his natural arrogance and ambition had become more dangerous than ever, now that he had been raised to the dignity of the consulate and was Caesar's colleague in that office. Brutus, however, opposed this idea.¹⁰⁷ He insisted in the first place that they should act only with strict justice, and he also held out the hope that Antony might undergo a change of heart. He still cherished the idea that once Caesar was out of the way, Antony's good nature, ambition and love of glory would respond to the noble example set by the conspirators, and that he would join them in helping their country to achieve her liberty. In this way Brutus actually saved Antony's life, but in the general alarm which followed the murder Antony put off his senator's toga, disguised himself in the clothing of an ordinary person and made his escape.

Brutus and his companions then went up to the Capitol, and with their hands smeared with blood and brandishing their naked daggers they called upon the citizens to assert their liberty. At first they were greeted only by cries of fear, and the general confusion was increased by people wildly running to and fro. But since there was no more bloodshed and no looting of property, the senators and many of the people took courage and went up to the conspirators in the Capitol. When a large crowd had assembled, Brutus made a speech which suited the occasion and was calculated to please the people.¹⁰⁸ His

audience applauded him loudly and called upon him to come down from the Capitol, and the conspirators, their confidence returning, now made their way to the forum. The rest of them walked together, but Brutus found himself surrounded by many of the most distinguished men in Rome, who escorted him in their midst with great honour from the Capitol, and conducted him to the rostra.¹⁰⁹ The crowd that faced him was an audience of mixed composition¹¹⁰ and had come prepared to raise a riot, but at the sight of Brutus it was overcome with awe and awaited his words in orderly silence. When he came forward to speak, they listened intently to what he said, but the moment that Cinna began to denounce Caesar¹¹¹ it became clear that many of his listeners were far from pleased with what had been done. The crowd's anger began to rise, and they abused Cinna so violently that the conspirators took refuge again in the Capitol. Thereupon, Brutus sent away the most distinguished of the citizens who had accompanied him, as he was afraid that they might be besieged there, and he did not think it right that they should run such a risk, considering that they had no share in the deed.¹¹²

19. On the following day,¹¹³ however, the senate held a meeting in the Temple of the goddess Tellus, and Antony, Plancus¹¹⁴ and Cicero spoke in favour of a general reconciliation and of passing a decree of amnesty. A motion was then approved according to which not only was no action to be taken against the conspirators, but the consuls were to propose a measure conferring honours upon them.¹¹⁵ After passing these decrees the senate adjourned. Then, after Antony had sent his son to the Capitol as a hostage, Brutus and his companions again came down, and both parties mingled and exchanged embraces and handshakes. Antony invited Cassius to his house, Lepidus received Brutus, and the rest were similarly entertained by their various acquaintances or friends. At daybreak the senators met again,¹¹⁶ and their first action was to pass a vote of thanks to Antony for having averted the outbreak of a civil war; next they commended the action of Brutus and his friends who were present, and after this they proceeded to the distribution of the provinces.¹¹⁷ Crete was allotted to Brutus, Africa to Cassius, Asia to Trebonius, Bithynia to Cimber and Cisalpine Gaul to Brutus Albinus.

20. Then the question of Caesar's will and of the arrangements for his funeral were debated. Antony and his supporters demanded that the will should be read in public, and that Caesar's body should not be buried secretly but with due honour,¹¹⁸ otherwise the people's indignation might break out again. Cassius opposed these demands with all his might, but Brutus gave way and agreed to them, and this, people thought, was his second serious error of judgement: in the first

place, by sparing Antony's life he had laid himself open to the charge of raising up a most bitter and formidable enemy against the conspirators, and now, by allowing Caesar's funeral to be conducted in the way that Antony proposed, he committed a fatal blunder. The first consequence of this was that, when it became known¹¹⁹ that according to the terms of his will the dictator had presented to every Roman citizen 75 drachmas,¹²⁰ and had bequeathed them the use of his gardens beyond the Tiber where the Temple of Fortune now stands, a great wave of affection for Caesar and a powerful sense of his loss swept over the people; and the second was that, after the dead man had been brought to the forum, Antony delivered the customary funeral oration over his body.¹²¹ As soon as he saw that the people were deeply stirred by his speech, he changed his tone and struck a note of compassion, and picking up Caesar's robe, covered with blood as it was, he unfolded it for all to see, pointing out each gash where the daggers had stabbed through and the number of Caesar's wounds. At this all sense of order was immediately lost. Some shouted aloud to kill the murderers, others, as had happened before in the case of Clodius the demagogue,¹²² dragged out benches and tables from the neighbouring shops and piled them on top of one another to make an enormous pyre. On this they laid Caesar's corpse and solemnly set fire to it¹²³ in this spot that was surrounded by many temples, sanctuaries and holy places. Then, as the flames began to mount, people rushed up from all sides, seized burning brands, and ran through the city to the murderers' houses to set them alight.

The conspirators had already barricaded themselves in and were able to fend off the danger, but there was a man named Cinna, a poet, who had had no connection with the crime, and was actually a friend of Caesar's.¹²⁴ He dreamed that he had been invited by Caesar to supper and had declined, but that Caesar had pressed him to come, and had finally taken him by the hand and led him to a vast and gloomy place, into which he had followed his host reluctantly with a feeling of horror. After the vision had left him, he found himself attacked by a fever which lasted all night. However, when morning came and Caesar's body was being carried out to his funeral, he felt ashamed not to be present and went out to join the crowd, who were by now in a savage mood. There he was seen, and since the crowd did not know who he was, but mistook him for the Cinna who had recently denounced Caesar in his speech,¹²⁵ they tore him to pieces.

21. This episode was second only to Antony's change of attitude in its effect on Brutus and his party, and they were so alarmed that they left the city.¹²⁶ At first they waited for some time at Antium, in the hope of returning to Rome as soon as the people's fury had subsided. They

expected this to happen as a matter of course, since city mobs are so fickle and unstable in their impulses,¹²⁷ and they knew that the senate was well disposed towards them: for although it had allowed the men who had lynched Cinna to go free, it had made inquiries and arrested those who had attacked the conspirators' houses. By this time too, the people were becoming discontented with Antony, who was establishing himself in a position which was hardly to be distinguished from a monarchy:¹²⁸ they longed for Brutus's return and it was expected that he would appear in person to supervise the public games, which it was his duty as praetor to provide. Brutus then discovered that many of Caesar's veterans, who had received land settlements and cities from their commander, were plotting to assassinate him and were making their way into Rome in small groups, and so he was not sufficiently confident to come back. However, the public games were given in spite of his absence and were presented with great expense and magnificence.¹²⁹ Brutus had previously purchased large numbers of wild beasts, and he now gave orders that all of these should be used and none sold or left behind. He also travelled to Naples where he engaged many of the Artists of Dionysus,¹³⁰ and he wrote to his friends about Canutius, an actor who was especially popular at that time, and asked them to persuade him to visit Rome, as he did not approve of any Greek being compelled to go there. Besides this he was writing to Cicero and asking him on no account to fail to attend these games.¹³¹

22. This was the situation at Rome when the appearance of the young Caesar Octavian¹³² gave a second completely new turn to events.¹³³ He was the son of Caesar's niece,¹³⁴ but the dictator's will revealed that Caesar had formally adopted him and made him his son and heir. At the moment when Caesar was murdered, Octavian had been pursuing his studies at Apollonia on the Illyrian coast, where he intended to join the expedition which Caesar had planned to lead almost immediately against the Parthians.¹³⁵ As soon as he had learned of Caesar's fate, he came to Rome, and his first populist move was to assume Caesar's name; then he distributed to the entire citizen body the money that had been left them in Caesar's will.¹³⁶ In this way he not only politically outmanoeuvred Antony, he also succeeded by a lavish use of these funds in rallying many of Caesar's veterans to his side. Cicero was also persuaded by his hatred of Antony to attach himself to Octavian's party, and for this he was indignantly reproached by Brutus. He noticed, he wrote,¹³⁷ that Cicero did not really object to a tyrant, but was only afraid of a tyrant who hated him, and that when he declared in his letters and speeches what a good man Octavian was, his policy was really to recommend a

generous form of slavery. ‘But our forefathers,’ he reminded Cicero, ‘would not tolerate even mild tyrants.’¹³⁸ As for himself, his mind was not yet fully made up whether to choose war or peace, but on one thing he was utterly resolved, that he would never be a slave. It astonished him, he went on, that Cicero should be so afraid of a civil war with all its dangers, but not of a dishonourable and ignominious peace, and that as a reward for getting rid of the tyranny of Antony he should ask for the privilege of setting Octavian up in his place.

23. This was the gist of Brutus’s first letters to Cicero. But already by this time the Roman state was beginning to divide into two factions, the one supporting Octavian and the other Antony, and the soldiers, as though they were part of an auction, sold their allegiance to the highest bidder.¹³⁹ In this situation Brutus despaired of events turning out as he had once hoped. He therefore resolved to abandon Italy¹⁴⁰ and travelled overland through Lucania to the seaport of Velia. His wife Porcia was going to return from there to Rome. She tried to conceal her distress at parting from Brutus, but the sight of a painting gave her feelings away; in every other respect she had behaved with the dignity one would expect from someone of her nobility. The subject was drawn from Greek legend – it was of Andromache seeing Hector off to battle – and the picture showed her taking from his arms their little son, while her gaze was fixed upon her husband.¹⁴¹ As Porcia looked at it, the image of her own sorrow which it conjured up made her burst into tears, and she went to see the picture time after time each day, and wept before it. On this occasion Acilius,¹⁴² one of Brutus’s friends, quoted the verses from Homer which Andromache speaks to Hector:

Hector, to me you are all: you my father, you my lady mother,
You my brother, you my loving husband ...¹⁴³

Brutus smiled at him and said, ‘But I am not minded to give Porcia the answer that Hector gave: “Work at your loom and your distaff, and give your commands to your servants.”’¹⁴⁴ She may not have the strength for the same exploits as are expected of a man, but she has the spirit to fight as nobly for her country as any of us.’ We have this story from Porcia’s son, Bibulus.¹⁴⁵

24. After leaving Velia, Brutus sailed to Athens, where he was received with great enthusiasm by the people and granted various public honours.¹⁴⁶ He stayed in the city with a friend, attended the lectures of Theomnestus of the Academy and Cratippus of the Peripatetic school,¹⁴⁷ discussed philosophy with them and appeared to be completely engrossed in literary pursuits. But all this while,

without anybody suspecting it, he was making preparations for war. He planned to win over the commanders of the Roman armies in Macedonia,¹⁴⁸ and for this purpose sent Herostratus there, and at the same time he spent time cultivating all the young Romans who were studying in Athens and rallying them to his cause.¹⁴⁹ One of these was Cicero's son, whom he praised in enthusiastic terms, saying that whether awake or dreaming he could not but admire a man who displayed such a noble spirit and such a detestation of tyranny.¹⁵⁰ Later he began to act more openly, and when he found out that some Roman ships carrying money were sailing from Asia, and that their commander¹⁵¹ was an agreeable man and known to him by reputation, he went to meet him in Carystus, a city in Euboea. After conferring with him and persuading him to hand over the ships, Brutus arranged a splendid entertainment, for the occasion happened to be his birthday. Then, after they had begun drinking and proposed the toast of *Victory to Brutus and Liberty for Rome*, Brutus, wishing to encourage the company still further, called for a larger bowl. As he held it in his hand, he recited, for no apparent reason, this verse from Homer, the last words of the dying Patroclus:

It is fate that has killed me, and Apollo, Leto's son.¹⁵²

Some writers have added that when Brutus was going out to fight his last battle at Philippi the password which he chose for his troops was 'Apollo',¹⁵³ and they conclude that the sudden impulse which led him to quote this line served as an ominous portent of his defeat.

25. After this Antistius¹⁵⁴ gave him half a million drachmas out of the money which he too was taking to Italy, and the remnants of Pompey's army, who were still roaming about Thessaly,¹⁵⁵ gladly rallied to his standard. He also took from Cinna a force of five hundred cavalry, which Cinna was conducting to Dolabella in Asia.¹⁵⁶ Next he sailed to Demetrias, a port in Thessaly, where he seized a large quantity of arms, which Julius Caesar had ordered to be collected for his Parthian campaign,¹⁵⁷ and which were about to be delivered to Antony.

Hortensius, the governor of Macedonia, now handed over the province to him,¹⁵⁸ and the neighbouring kings and rulers declared their support and offered him assistance. Then news arrived that Gaius, Mark Antony's brother, had crossed from Italy and was on his way to join the troops commanded by Vatinius in Epidamnus and Apollonia.¹⁵⁹ Brutus decided to anticipate his arrival and capture his army before it could be reinforced. He therefore set out immediately with the troops he had ready and marched across difficult country,

harassed by snow-storms and moving far ahead of his supply train. As he reached the neighbourhood of Epidamnus he began to suffer from the disease known as *boulimia*,¹⁶⁰ which is brought on by cold and exhaustion. This is a malady which attacks both men and beasts, especially when they are fighting their way through the snow and are weakened by fatigue. It may be that the natural heat of the body, when it finds itself frozen in and thickened by the surrounding cold, quickly exhausts its nourishment, or else possibly that the sharp and subtle vapour which arises from the snow penetrates the body and annihilates the warmth as it emanates from the pores. For the body's sweat is evidently generated by this inward warmth, and a counter-action is set up by the cold which it meets as soon as it reaches the skin. However, I have discussed this subject at greater length elsewhere.¹⁶¹

26. Brutus now found himself overcome by faintness. None of his soldiers had a morsel of food to give him, so that his attendants were obliged to appeal to their enemies, and, going up to the gates of the city,¹⁶² they asked the sentinels for some bread. When these men heard of Brutus's sickness, they came to him of their own accord and brought food and drink. In return, when Brutus captured the city later, he showed kindness not only to them but also to all the rest of the inhabitants for their sake.

When Gaius Antonius arrived at Apollonia, he ordered all the soldiers who were encamped near the city to join him. Instead they went over to Brutus, and at the same time it became clear to him that the people of Apollonia were also on Brutus's side, and he therefore left the city and advanced against Buthrotum. First of all he lost three cohorts, which Brutus cut to pieces while his opponent was on the march, and later when he offered battle in an attempt to force the lines surrounding Byllis, which his opponents had already occupied, he was defeated by the young Cicero,¹⁶³ whom Brutus had entrusted with a command and who gained many successes for his general. However, when Brutus himself caught Gaius on marshy ground with his forces widely scattered, he would not allow his troops to attack. Instead, he rode round his opponent's army and gave orders for their lives to be spared, as he was convinced that before long they would be fighting on his side. And this was exactly what happened: they surrendered both themselves and their general,¹⁶⁴ so that Brutus found himself in command of a powerful force. He treated Gaius with full military honours for a long while and allowed him to keep his insignia of rank,¹⁶⁵ in spite of the fact, so we are told, that many people including Cicero wrote from Rome urging him to have Gaius executed.¹⁶⁶ But when Gaius began to enter into secret negotiations

with Brutus's officers and attempted to stir up a mutiny, Brutus had him transferred to a ship¹⁶⁷ and kept him under close arrest. When the soldiers whom Gaius had seduced from their loyalty escaped to Apollonia and asked Brutus to come to them there, he answered them that this was not a Roman custom, but that they themselves must come to their commander and beg him to forgive their offence. This they did, and when they asked for pardon Brutus granted it.¹⁶⁸

27. As he was on the point of crossing into Asia, news reached him of the transformation of the situation in Rome: for the senate had built up Octavian as a counter to Antony, and Octavian had driven his rival out of Italy.¹⁶⁹ It was Octavian who was now to be feared, since he was pressing to have himself appointed consul contrary to the law, and was maintaining large armies of which the state had no need. However, when he saw that even the senators were beginning to disapprove of these proceedings and to turn their eyes abroad towards Brutus and were passing a decree confirming him in command of his provinces,¹⁷⁰ Octavian became alarmed. He therefore sent messengers to Antony to propose a reconciliation. At the same time he brought up his army to surround Rome and proceeded to force through his own appointment as consul,¹⁷¹ although he was a mere boy and still only in his twentieth year, as he himself has recorded in his *Memoirs*.¹⁷² One of his first actions was to institute a prosecution for murder against Brutus and his fellow-conspirators on the charge of having put to death without a trial the first man in the state who was holding its highest offices, and he appointed Lucius Cornificius as the prosecutor of Brutus and Marcus Agrippa of Cassius.¹⁷³ The accused were then condemned by default, the jurors being compelled to record their votes. It is said that, when the herald in the traditional fashion mounted the rostra and summoned Brutus to appear, the crowd were heard to utter a deep groan and the better class of citizen bowed their heads in silence. Publius Silicius¹⁷⁴ was seen to burst into tears and for this reason his name was soon afterwards included in the list of the proscribed. A little later Octavian, Antony and Lepidus became reconciled with one another, formed the triumvirate,¹⁷⁵ divided the provinces between them and drew up a proscription list of two hundred men who were to be killed.¹⁷⁶ The dead included Cicero.¹⁷⁷

28. When the news of these events reached Macedonia, Brutus was obliged to send orders to Hortensius¹⁷⁸ that Gaius Antonius should be executed. He represented this as a reprisal for the deaths of Cicero and Brutus Albinus, the one of whom was his close friend and the other his kinsman.¹⁷⁹ This was the reason why, when Hortensius was later captured at the battle of Philippi, Antony had him executed over the tomb of his brother.¹⁸⁰ Brutus comments¹⁸¹ that he felt more shame at

the cause of Cicero's death than sorrow for the fact of it, and that he blamed his friends in Rome for what had happened. He says that it was their own fault, not the tyrants', that they had been turned into slaves, and they had allowed themselves to look on tamely at deeds which they should have considered it intolerable even to hear of.

Brutus now crossed into Asia with his army,¹⁸² which was already an imposing force. He gave orders for a fleet to be fitted out in Bithynia and at the neighbouring port of Cyzicus, while he himself, travelling through the provinces by land, settled the affairs of the various cities and gave audiences to the local rulers. He also sent messengers to Cassius in Syria to recall him from his intended expedition to Egypt. He reminded him that they were not roaming about the provinces to carve out an empire for themselves: their purpose was to gather an army with which they could overthrow the tyrants and restore liberty to their country. They should keep this purpose constantly before them, and, so far from wandering a long way from Italy, they should hurry back and rescue their fellow-countrymen.¹⁸³

Cassius did as he was told, and as he marched back Brutus went to meet him. When they were reunited at Smyrna this was the first time the two had seen each other since they had separated at Piraeus, the one on his way to Syria, the other to Macedonia, and so they could feel great pleasure and confidence at the forces which each of them now led. They had set out from Italy like the most despised of exiles, without money or arms, without so much as a single ship equipped with oars, a soldier to follow them or a city to give them shelter, and now within a few months they were reunited with a fleet, money and an army of horse and foot at their backs, and had become formidable contenders for the empire of Rome.

29. Cassius was anxious that Brutus and he should treat one another with equal honour, but Brutus often forestalled his intentions by coming to visit him, since Cassius was the older man¹⁸⁴ and could not endure the same degree of physical hardship. Cassius had the reputation of being a formidable soldier, but also a man of violent temper who maintained his authority chiefly through fear, although with his intimate friends he was rather too apt to descend to jesting or buffoonery. Brutus's virtues, on the other hand, made him popular (so they say) with the rank and file, beloved by his friends, and admired by the nobility, while even his enemies found it impossible to hate him. He was a man of a singularly gentle nature and a lofty idealism, who stood unmoved by the temptations of anger, self-indulgence or greed, but was upright and inflexible in defence of what he thought honourable and just, so that the affection and reputation which he

earned were based above all on the confidence which men felt in his principles. In the case of Pompey the Great, for example, nobody had imagined that if he had conquered Caesar he would have disbanded his armies in obedience to the laws: it was generally assumed that he would retain the supreme power, but would pacify the people by adopting the style of consul or dictator or some other more acceptable title of authority.¹⁸⁵ Again, Cassius was known to be a man of violent and uncontrolled passions, whose craving for money had often tempted him to stray from the path of justice, and it therefore seemed natural that his motive for fighting, wandering about the empire and risking his life was not to win liberty for his fellow-countrymen, but to secure some great position of power for himself. The leaders of the generation that preceded Pompey and Cassius, men such as Cinna and Marius and Carbo, had all treated their country as a prize of war, and had all but openly proclaimed that they fought to secure absolute power. But even Brutus's enemies never accused him of betraying his principles in this way, and indeed Antony was heard by many people to declare that Brutus was the only one of Caesar's attackers who was moved by the splendour and what he believed to be the nobility of the deed, while all the rest were conspirators because they envied and hated the individual.¹⁸⁶ It is plain too from Brutus's letters that he put his trust in the virtue of his cause rather than in armed force. Just before the final crisis in his fortunes, he writes to Atticus¹⁸⁷ that his affairs are standing in the best situation that fortune could devise, since he will either conquer and restore freedom to the Roman people, or die and be released from slavery, and that, while all other issues have been safely settled for him and his supporters, one thing alone remains uncertain, whether they will live in freedom or die. He adds in the same letter that Mark Antony is paying a just penalty for his folly, since at the moment when he had the choice of taking his place in history beside such men as Brutus, Cassius and Cato, he had preferred to make himself a mere appendage of Octavian; and he foretold that, if those two were not defeated together, they would soon be fighting one another. In this he seems to have been an excellent prophet.

30. While they were at Smyrna, Brutus asked Cassius to give him a part of the large sums of money which he had collected, since his own funds had been spent in building a fleet large enough to enable them to control the whole of the Mediterranean. But Cassius's friends opposed his giving anything to Brutus. 'This is money', they said, 'that you have saved by your own frugality and at the cost of much ill feeling. It is not fair to let Brutus take it and play the demagogue to win his troops' goodwill.' In spite of this Cassius handed over to him a

third of the whole sum.

After this the two armies parted again to pursue their various operations. Cassius captured Rhodes, but he acted there with unreasonable severity,¹⁸⁸ and this behaviour was certainly inconsistent with the reply which he gave to the citizens who had saluted him as their lord and king when he entered the city, for he told them, 'I am neither lord nor king, but I have punished and killed the man who would have been both.' Brutus, on the other hand, demanded money and troops from the people of Lycia. Naucrates the demagogue¹⁸⁹ responded by persuading the cities to revolt, and the inhabitants occupied certain heights which barred Brutus's line of march. Brutus first of all sent out a force of cavalry, who surprised the enemy as they were eating their morning meal and killed six hundred of them. Next he captured their strongholds and villages, but released all his prisoners without ransom in the hope of winning the people over by moderation. But the Lycians were obstinate and chose to nurse their resentment at their injuries and to despise Brutus's humanity and kindness, until he forced the most warlike of them to take refuge in the city of Xanthus, and then besieged it. The people tried to escape by swimming under the surface of the river which flowed past the city. But they were caught by nets which had been stretched across the channel and fastened to the bottom, while the tops had bells attached to them which gave the alarm as soon as anyone became entangled. After this the Xanthians made a sortie at night and set fire to some of the siege-engines, but they were seen by the Romans, trapped outside the city and forced back to the walls. Then, when a strong wind began to blow the flames back towards the battlements and some of the adjoining houses caught fire, Brutus, who was afraid that the whole city would be destroyed, ordered his men to help put out the blaze.¹⁹⁰

31. However, the Lycians were suddenly seized with a terrible and indescribable mood of despair, which can best be imagined as a passionate longing for death. Every inhabitant of the city, women and children, free men and slaves, people of every age and condition, hurled missiles from the walls at the Romans, as they struggled to help the citizens to overcome the flames; and meanwhile the Xanthians with their own hands brought up reeds, wood and every kind of inflammable material and so spread the fire throughout the city, feeding it with all the fuel they could find and doing everything possible to increase the strength and fury of the conflagration. As the fire rushed onwards, encircled the city on every side and wrapped it in a sheet of flame, Brutus in deep distress rode round the walls. He was desperate to save them, and with outstretched hands he implored the

Xanthians to spare themselves and save their city. Not a soul listened to him, but men and women alike sought only for the means to destroy themselves, so that even the little children with cries and shrieks leaped into the flames or flung themselves headlong from the walls, or offered themselves up to their fathers' swords, baring their throats and begging them to strike. After the destruction of the city a woman was seen hanging by a noose. She had a dead child fastened to her neck and was holding a lighted torch to set fire to her house. The sight was so tragic that Brutus could not bear to look at it, and burst into tears when he heard of it; he also proclaimed that a reward would be given to any soldier who succeeded in saving a Lycian. All but one hundred and fifty, we are told, escaped the Romans' efforts to save them. So it came about, after a long lapse of time, that the Xanthians showed the same courage and repeated the same disaster as their ancestors, as though they were fulfilling some predestined cycle of destruction: for the same people in the time of the Persian Empire had likewise burned down their city and destroyed themselves.¹⁹¹

32. When Brutus found that the city of Patara was offering a stout resistance to him, he hesitated to attack it and was at a loss what to do next, for fear that the people might be seized by the same despairing frenzy as the Xanthians. But as his prisoners included some of the women of Patara, he set them free without demanding a ransom. These were the wives and daughters of the most prominent citizens, and they at once extolled Brutus's virtues and reported that he was a most just and moderate man, and finally persuaded their compatriots to surrender and hand over the city. As a result, all the rest of the inhabitants of Lycia followed their example, submitted themselves to his authority and found that his kindness and humanity surpassed all their hopes. For while Cassius at about the same time compelled the Rhodians to surrender all the gold and silver which each of them possessed, thus collecting about 800 talents, and on top of this fined the city as a whole a further 500 talents,¹⁹² Brutus demanded from the Lycians no more than 150, and then set off for Ionia without harming them in any other way.

33. Brutus performed a great many other memorable acts of justice in meting out rewards or punishments to those who deserved them, but I shall mention only one which gave especial satisfaction both to himself and the most distinguished Romans of the time. When Pompey the Great landed at Pelusium in Egypt as a fugitive from Caesar after losing the great battle, the guardians of the boy king held a council with their friends at which their opinions were divided.¹⁹³ Some took the view that they should give Pompey asylum, and others that they should refuse to admit him to Egypt. Then a man named Theodotus of

Chios, who had been hired as a tutor in rhetoric for the young king, and who at that time was considered worthy, for lack of better men, to be a member of the council, declared that both parties, those in favour of admitting and of sending him away, were equally mistaken. In the present situation one policy and one only was expedient, and that was to receive him and then put him to death. He rounded off his speech by saying, 'A dead man does not bite.'¹⁹⁴ The council followed his advice, and thus fell Pompey the Great,¹⁹⁵ a victim of the rhetorical virtuosity of a sophist, as Theodotus afterwards used to boast, and an example of the unexpected and incredible mutability of fortune. When Caesar arrived in Egypt soon afterwards, the other assassins received their just reward and died the disgraceful death that they deserved.¹⁹⁶ Theodotus continued to borrow from fortune enough time to eke out a vagabond, penniless and ignominious existence, but he was discovered by Brutus¹⁹⁷ during his travels in Asia, brought before him, and punished,¹⁹⁸ and in this way his death became more memorable than anything in his life.

34. Brutus now invited Cassius to join him at Sardis.¹⁹⁹ As he approached, Brutus went out to meet him with his friends, and the whole army drawn up in full array saluted both men as Imperator.²⁰⁰ But as often happens in great enterprises in which a large number of friends and commanders are engaged, there had been some sharp differences and mutual accusations had been exchanged. So immediately after their journey their first action was to meet in a room face to face. The doors were shut, and with no one else present the two men first began blaming one another and then fell to charges and recriminations. These soon led to tears and a passionate and frank exchange, and their friends, who were amazed at the vehemence and intensity of their anger, were afraid that the quarrel might end in violence. They had been strictly forbidden to enter, but in spite of this, Marcus Favonius,²⁰¹ who had been besotted with Cato, and who pursued philosophy with an impulsive fanaticism rather than in a spirit of reason, tried to enter the room but was prevented by their servants. However, once he had committed himself to any action it was not easy to stop him, for he was always a man of impulses and extremes. He attached very little importance to the dignity of his rank as a Roman senator, and by cultivating a cynical and outspoken manner he contrived to soften the offence which his words might otherwise have caused, and consequently men were prepared to treat his impertinence as a joke. So on this occasion he forced his way through the bystanders and burst into the room, where he proceeded to quote in an affected voice the words that Homer gives to Nestor:

and so on. At this Cassius broke out laughing, but Brutus pushed Favonius out of the room, telling him that he was a bogus Cynic, really just an impudent dog.²⁰³ However, this episode broke up their quarrel for the moment and they parted at once. Later Cassius gave a supper to which Brutus invited his friends. As the guests were just taking their places on the couches, Favonius arrived, fresh from the bath. Brutus called out to him, told him that he had not been invited and ordered the servants to show him to the couch at the end of the room, but Favonius pushed his way past them and proceeded to take his place at the central couch.²⁰⁴ Then, as they drank, the entertainment became more genial, and their talk was seasoned with wit and philosophy.

35. On the following day, Brutus publicly condemned and disgraced Lucius Pella.²⁰⁵ He was a Roman who had held the office of praetor and enjoyed Brutus's confidence, but had been accused by the Sardiens of embezzling public money. Cassius bitterly resented this action, because only a few days before, when two of his friends had been found guilty of the same offence, he had privately reprimanded them but acquitted them in public and continued to employ them. He therefore blamed Brutus for being over-respectful of law and justice at a time which called for some diplomatic leniency. But Brutus retorted that Cassius should remember the Ides of March, the day on which they had killed Caesar, not because he was plundering mankind, but because his power enabled others to do so. If we are going to find excuses for neglecting justice, he argued, it would have been better to put up with Caesar's friends than to allow our own to do wrong. For in that case we should only have been called cowards, but as things are, after all the toils and dangers we have undergone, we shall now find ourselves called unjust into the bargain. These were the principles that Brutus kept before him.

36. When they were on the point of crossing from Asia,²⁰⁶ Brutus is said to have seen an extraordinary portent. He was a light sleeper and by practice and self-discipline he had cut down his period of rest to only a few hours.²⁰⁷ He never lay down during the day, and at night only when, as a result of everyone having gone to bed, it was impossible for him to discuss or transact any more business. At this moment, when the war had begun and the whole management of the campaign rested in his hands and he was giving anxious thought to the future, it was his habit to take his first sleep in the evening after supper, and spend the rest of the night dealing with urgent business. If ever he succeeded in dispatching these affairs in a shorter time, he

would read a book until the third watch, when the centurions and tribunes would come to him for orders. One night, just before the army crossed over from Asia, he was sitting in his tent, which was dimly lit; the hour was late, and the whole camp was wrapped in silence. In the midst of his meditations, he thought he heard someone enter the tent, and as he turned his eyes towards the entrance he caught sight of a strange and horrible apparition,²⁰⁸ a monstrous and terrifying figure standing silently by his side. Summoning up his courage to question it, he asked, 'What man or god are you, and what do you want with me?' The phantom answered softly, 'I am your evil spirit, Brutus: you shall see me at Philippi.' Brutus remained calm and replied, 'I shall see you then.'

37. When the phantom had vanished, Brutus called his servants, but they assured him that they had neither heard a voice nor seen any apparition. Brutus stayed awake for the rest of the night, but as soon as it was morning he visited Cassius and described what he had seen. Cassius, who was a follower of the philosophy of Epicurus, and who used frequently to dispute with Brutus on subjects of this kind, said to him: 'Our doctrine, Brutus, is that by no means everything that we see or experience is real or true.²⁰⁹ In the first place, the perceptions that come to us through the senses are deceptive and unstable, and, secondly, our intelligence is quick to transform the experience itself, which may start from nothing, into a whole variety of forms. What the senses register is like an external impression on wax, whereas the human soul, which includes both the plastic faculty and the material upon which it works, can adorn and shape itself at will. We can see this process at work in our dreams, where the imagination transforms some quite insubstantial experience into all kinds of emotions and shapes. It is the nature of the imagination to be eternally active, and this action takes the form of fancy or of thought. Now in your case you have passed through a great many hardships, which have imposed a severe strain on your body, and this condition both stimulates and distorts the intelligence. As for spirits, I do not believe that they exist, or, if they do, that they can take on the appearance and speech of men, or that they can exert a power which is capable of affecting us. For my part, I could even wish that were true. If it were, we could put our trust not only in our army and our horses and our ships, which are strong enough, but also in the help of the gods, since we are the leaders of a most righteous and sacred cause.' These were the arguments which Cassius used to reassure Brutus.

As the soldiers were disembarking, two eagles perched on the leading standards and were carried along with them on the march. They were fed by the soldiers and accompanied the army as far as

Philippi. But there on the day before the battle they flew away.

38. Brutus had already subdued most of the people through whose territory they passed on the march, but now, as they advanced, they brought over the remaining cities and rulers to their side. When they reached the coast opposite the island of Thasos,²¹⁰ Norbanus²¹¹ was encamped with his army at the narrows, near Symbolon,²¹² but they outflanked him and forced him to retire and abandon his position. In fact they came near to capturing his whole force – since Octavian’s advance was delayed by his sickness²¹³ – and they would have done so if Antony had not hurried to the rescue²¹⁴ with such astonishing speed that Brutus and his men could not believe it possible. Octavian arrived ten days later and pitched his camp opposite Brutus, while Antony faced Cassius.

The ground which lay between the two camps was known to the Romans as the plains of Philippi, and these were the two largest Roman armies which had ever faced one another in battle. Brutus’s force was considerably smaller in numbers than Octavian’s,²¹⁵ but the superb quality of its weapons and equipment made it a magnificent sight. Most of his men’s armour was embossed with gold and silver which Brutus had lavished on his soldiers. He had trained his officers to adopt a modest and austere standard of living²¹⁶ in other respects, but he believed that the wealth which a man held in his hands or wore on his back lent courage to an ambitious soldier, while those who thought most of gain would fight all the harder, since they clung to their armour as a prized possession.

39. Octavian and Antony now carried out a review and a ceremony of purification in their entrenchments, and then distributed a little meal and 5 drachmas to each man for a sacrifice. Brutus and Cassius, on the other hand, showed their contempt for their opponents’ poverty and meanness first of all by carrying out their purification in the open air, as is the normal custom, and then by distributing large numbers of cattle to every cohort for sacrifice and 50 drachmas to each man, and in this way they raised the goodwill and fighting spirit of their troops far above the enemy’s. Still, Cassius met with what was considered an unlucky omen during the ceremony, for the lictor brought him the garland which he was to wear turned upside down. It is also said that, on an earlier occasion during a procession at some festival, a golden statue of Victory which belonged to Cassius and was being carried before him suddenly fell to the ground when its bearer lost his footing. Besides this, a great number of birds of prey were seen circling the camp each day, and swarms of bees collected at a certain place within the lines. The diviners fenced off the spot, so as to dispel by means of their rites the superstitious fears which by this time had quite cowed

the spirits of their troops, and were beginning to undermine even Cassius's Epicurean beliefs.

It was for these reasons that Cassius did not wish to put their fortunes to the test by fighting a battle at that moment, but was in favour of prolonging the war, since their side's strength lay in its financial resources, while in arms and manpower they were comparatively weak. Brutus, on the other hand, even before this had been eager to decide the issue with the least possible delay, so that he could either restore his country's freedom or deliver from their miseries all those peoples who were oppressed by the demands of military service, requisitions and the vast expenses of war.²¹⁷ It happened at this moment that his cavalry won some successes in the preliminary skirmishing and so his spirits rose. At the same time there were a number of desertions to Octavian's camp and a host of rumours and suspicions that more would follow, and at their council of war this factor persuaded many of Cassius's friends to support Brutus's opinion. However, one of Brutus's friends, Atellius,²¹⁸ opposed his plan and advised that they should wait at least until the winter was over before fighting a battle. Brutus asked him how he thought he would be better off in a year's time, whereupon Atellius reported, 'At least I shall have lived that much longer, if nothing else!' Cassius was not at all pleased with this answer, while the rest of the council were greatly offended. It was finally decided to give battle on the following day.

40. That evening at supper Brutus showed himself full of confidence, took part in philosophical arguments with his friends and afterwards went to rest. Cassius, by contrast, so Messala tells us,²¹⁹ dined in private with a few of his closest friends and appeared silent and thoughtful, contrary to his natural manner. After their meal he pressed Messala's hand earnestly, and speaking in Greek, as he was in the habit of doing when he wanted to show affection, he declared, 'I call on you to witness, Messala, that the same thing is happening to me as to Pompey the Great, for I am compelled to cast my country's dice on the issue of a single battle.²²⁰ But let us show a stout heart, and look Fortune steadily in the face as we await her verdict. For even if our own plans are at fault, we should not distrust her.' These were the last words, so Messala tells us,²²¹ that Cassius spoke to him, after which the two men embraced. Cassius had already invited Messala to supper on the following day, which was his own birthday.

Next morning,²²² as soon as it was light, a scarlet tunic, which was the signal for battle, was hung out in front of Brutus's and Cassius's camps, and the two generals came out and met in the space between their armies. On this occasion Cassius said to Brutus, 'May this day bring us victory, Brutus, and may we share our success for the rest of

our lives. But since the greatest of human affairs are the most uncertain, and since it will not be easy to see one another again if the battle goes against us, what have you decided to do if you have to choose between flight and death?’ Brutus answered, ‘When I was young, Cassius, and knew very little of the world, I was led, I do not know how, into making a massive philosophical claim. I blamed Cato for taking his own life,²²³ because I thought it was impious and unmanly to try to evade the divine course of things and not to accept fearlessly whatever may befall, but to run away from it. But now in the present state of my fortunes, I have become a different person. If the gods do not give their verdict in our favour, I have no desire to try other hopes or plans. I shall indeed praise my fortune: for on the Ides of March I gave up my life to my country, and since then for her sake I have lived another life which is free and glorious.’ At this Cassius smiled. Then he embraced Brutus and said, ‘Now that our minds are made up, let us march against the enemy, for either we shall conquer, or, if we lose, we have nothing to fear.’

After this they discussed the order of battle before their friends. Brutus asked Cassius to allow him to command the right wing, although the friends thought it more appropriate for this to be Cassius’s privilege, given his years and experience. Still, Cassius not only agreed but ordered Messala, who commanded the best troops in his army, to station himself on the right. Brutus immediately led out his splendidly equipped cavalry, and formed up his infantry in battle order equally promptly.

41. Meanwhile, Antony’s soldiers were engaged in digging trenches from the marshes, where they were encamped, into the plain, so as to cut off Cassius from the sea.²²⁴ Octavian – or rather his troops, for the commander himself was absent because of sickness²²⁵ – stayed on the defensive. They had never really expected that the enemy would risk a pitched battle, but supposed that they would do no more than make occasional sorties to disturb the men who were digging the trenches by discharging light missiles and creating a lot of noise. As they were not watching the troops posted opposite them, they were bewildered by the uproar and confused shouts which now began to reach them from the trenches. In the meanwhile, Brutus had sent out messages to his officers with the code word for immediate action written on them, while he himself rode along the line of the legions encouraging his men. Only a few actually heard the watchword as it was passed along. The great majority, without waiting for it, acted on a single impulse, and, shouting their battle-cry as one man, hurled themselves forward against the enemy. This disorderly charge threw the troops out of line, so that they lost contact with one another, and first Messala’s legion,

and then the others adjoining it, overlapped Octavian's left wing and were carried past it. They engaged the soldiers at the end of the line for a short while and killed no more than a few, but then found their way round the flank and burst into the camp. Octavian tells in his *Memoirs*²²⁶ how one of his friends, Marcus Artorius,²²⁷ had seen a vision in his sleep in which Octavian was urged to get up from his sick-bed and leave the camp. Acting on this warning, he had himself carried out only a short while before the attack began, and the rumour went round that he had been killed, for the enemy riddled his empty litter with their spears and javelins. When the camp was captured, those of his men who were found there were slaughtered, and two thousand Lacedaemonians who had recently arrived as allies were cut to pieces with them.

42. The part of Brutus's army which had not outflanked their opponents but engaged the main body, easily routed them and annihilated three legions in hand-to-hand fighting. Then, swept along by the impetus of their success and carrying Brutus with them, they rushed into the camp on the heels of the fugitives. But at this point the victors made a blunder, and their retreating adversaries were quick to seize their opportunity. Brutus's right wing had moved up in pursuit and detached itself from his main body, leaving the centre broken and exposed, and it was here that the enemy counter-attacked. The centre resisted stoutly and held its ground, but the left wing, where the troops had lost their formation and did not know what had happened elsewhere, was routed, and Octavian's men drove them back to their camp and sacked it. Neither of the generals was present during this action. Antony, we are told, had retired to the marsh to avoid the fury of the first charge,²²⁸ and Octavian had disappeared after being forced to leave his camp. In fact, a number of soldiers claimed to have killed him, and they showed Brutus their blood-stained swords and described Octavian's youthful appearance. But now the centre forced back their opponents with tremendous slaughter, and it became clear that Brutus had triumphed in his section of the battlefield, just as Cassius had been utterly defeated. And this turned out to be the fatal mischance that ruined their cause, namely that Brutus believed that Cassius had been victorious and did not come to his rescue, while Cassius believed that Brutus had been killed and did not wait for his help to arrive. At any rate Messala believes²²⁹ it to have been a conclusive proof of victory that Brutus captured three eagles and many standards from the enemy, while they took none of his.

After Brutus had sacked Octavian's camp and was riding back from the pursuit, he was surprised not to see Cassius's tent (which was higher than the rest) nor the others in their usual places, for most of

them had been destroyed immediately when the enemy broke into the camp. But those of his companions who were thought to possess the keenest sight told him that they could pick out the flashes of helmets and of many silver breast-plates moving about in Cassius's camp, and that, judging by their strength and the appearance of their armour, this was not the garrison that they had left behind. At the same time they said that they could not see the numbers of dead bodies which they would expect to be there if so many legions had been overrun. This was what gave Brutus the first hint of disaster, and so, leaving a guard in the enemy's camp, he called off the pursuit and rallied his forces to hurry to Cassius's help.

43. Cassius's situation had been as follows. At the beginning of the battle he had watched with disapproval as Brutus's troops launched their first charge without waiting for the watchword or the order to attack, nor was he any better pleased when, after the success of their onslaught, they immediately rushed off to loot and plunder the enemy's camp without a thought of surrounding their opponents. But his own manoeuvres were hesitant and ponderous rather than vigorous and calculated, and he found himself enveloped by the enemy's right wing. His cavalry at once turned and galloped off towards the sea, and when he saw his infantry also falling back he tried to rally them. He seized the standard from a standard-bearer who had taken to his heels, and planted it on the earth in front of him, although by now even his bodyguard were showing signs of wavering. At last he was forced to retreat with a few followers to a hill which overlooked the plain. Because of his short sight²³⁰ he could scarcely make out his own camp being plundered, but the few horsemen who were with him saw a large body of cavalry riding towards them, which had in fact been sent by Brutus. Cassius believed that this was an enemy force sent to pursue him, but he dispatched one of his companions, Titinius,²³¹ to reconnoitre. The horsemen saw him riding towards them, and when they recognized him as one of Cassius's trusted friends they shouted for joy. Some of his own comrades leaped off their horses, flung their arms about him and clasped his hand, while the rest rode around him, singing, shouting and clashing their weapons to show their overwhelming delight, and so it was their very joy that brought about the tragedy. For Cassius at once assumed that Titinius had been genuinely captured by the enemy. He cried out, 'I have clung to life too long, to see my friend made prisoner before my very eyes!' Then he retired into an empty tent, forcing one of his freedmen named Pindarus to accompany him. Ever since the disaster of the Parthian campaign,²³² when he had served under Crassus, Cassius had prepared this man to play his part in just such an

emergency. Cassius had escaped the Parthians, but now he drew his cloak over his head²³³ and, baring his neck, offered it to the sword. Later his head was found severed from his body. But after his master's death Pindarus was never seen again, and for this reason some people have suggested that he killed Cassius without waiting for the order. Soon after this, Brutus's horsemen were recognized and Titinius, whom they had crowned with garlands, rode up to report to Cassius. But as soon as he learned from the weeping and lamentations of Cassius's friends of the fate that had overtaken the general, he reproached himself bitterly for his slowness which had been the cause, and then drew his sword and fell upon it.

44. Brutus had already learned of Cassius's defeat and was riding back towards him, but the news of his death reached him just as he was approaching the camp. He mourned over his friend's body, and called Cassius the last of all the Romans,²³⁴ by which he meant that so noble a spirit could never again be bred in Rome. He had the body wrapped for burial and sent it to Thasos, as he did not wish the army to be overcome with grief at the funeral rites. But he himself rallied Cassius's troops and cheered their dejected spirits. He saw that the sacking of their camp had deprived them of the simplest necessities of life, and so he promised each man the sum of 2,000 drachmas to make good what they had lost. They were astounded at the size of the gift, took heart again at his words and sent him on his way with cheers, acclaiming him as the only one of the four generals who had not been defeated in the battle. And indeed the event proved that he had good cause to be confident of victory, for with only a few legions he had put all his opponents to flight. If he had only concentrated the whole of his strength into his attack, and if so many of his men had not charged past the enemy and then fallen to plundering their possessions, it seems certain that he would have crushed the whole of his opponents' army.

45. Brutus's losses were eight thousand men, including his slaves and camp-followers, who were known as the Briges, but Messala²³⁵ reports that Antony and Octavian lost more than twice as many. For this reason Antony and Octavian felt even more discouraged, until one of Cassius's servants, whose name was Demetrius, came that evening to Antony with the clothes and the sword which he had stripped from his master's dead body. This raised their spirits so much that at daybreak they led out their forces in battle order. On the other side, both of the camps which Brutus now commanded were dangerously disorganized. His own was filled with prisoners of war, which obliged him to detach a strong guard, while Cassius's troops were upset by the change of command, and at the same time these defeated troops were full of

jealousy and resentment towards their victorious comrades. Brutus therefore decided to keep his troops under arms, but not to risk a battle.²³⁶ He noticed that large numbers of the slaves whom he had captured were moving about in a suspicious fashion while under guard, and so he ordered them to be executed. On the other hand he released some of his free-born prisoners and declared that it was really the enemy who had deprived them of their liberty, for under their command these men were captives and slaves, whereas with him they were free men and citizens of Rome. Then, when he saw that his friends and officers were determined to take revenge on them, he saved their lives by hiding them and helping them to escape.

Among these prisoners there were an actor and a clown, the one named Volumnius and the other Sacculio. Brutus regarded both these men as beneath his notice, but his friends had them brought before him and denounced them, because even in captivity they could not resist making insolent and derisive jokes. Brutus, who had his mind on other matters, said nothing, but Messala Corvinus²³⁷ gave his opinion that they should be sentenced to a public flogging and then sent back naked to the enemy's generals, as being exactly the right comrades and drinking companions for such commanders. At this some of the onlookers burst out laughing, but Publius Casca,²³⁸ the man who had been the first to stab Caesar, said, 'Do you think it is right, Brutus, that we should celebrate Cassius's funeral rites with laughter and fooling like this? But we shall soon see what regard you have for his memory, according to whether you punish or protect these men who are going to abuse and dishonour him.' Brutus was furious and answered, 'Then why do you ask my opinion, Casca, instead of doing what you think best?' This answer was taken as signifying Brutus's consent to the punishment of these wretched men, and they were led off to execution.

46. After this, Brutus gave his soldiers their promised reward, and when he had mildly reprimanded them because they had not waited for the watchword but launched themselves without orders into a haphazard attack, he promised to hand over two cities, Thessalonica and Sparta,²³⁹ for them to plunder, provided that they fought well in the coming battle. In the whole of Brutus's life this is the one charge to which no defence can be found. It is true, of course, that Antony and Octavian committed far greater cruelties than this in extorting rewards for their soldiers, and drove the inhabitants from their ancestral lands throughout the length and breadth of Italy to enrich their supporters with cities and estates to which they had no right.²⁴⁰ But to these men conquest and supreme power were the acknowledged ends of war. Brutus, on the other hand, enjoyed such a

reputation for virtue among the people that in their minds he was not allowed the freedom to conquer or to save himself unless he employed just and honourable means; this was more than ever the case now that Cassius was dead, because in the past he had been accused of leading Brutus astray into various acts of violence. The truth was that just as at sea, when a vessel's rudder is shattered, the crew try to fit and fasten other timbers in its place, and in their effort to overcome the danger do not achieve a perfect repair, but simply the best they can contrive, so Brutus, being left in sole command of such a great army at a moment of crisis, and having no commander of the same capacity as himself, was obliged to make use of such subordinates as he possessed and to fit many of his actions and words to what they found acceptable. This was why he decided to do whatever they considered necessary to restore the spirit of Cassius's army, for these troops had now become very difficult to handle. Their lack of a personal commander made them undisciplined in camp, while their defeat made them afraid to face the enemy.

47. At the same time Octavian and Antony were no better off. Their supplies were scarce and, with their camp pitched as it was on low ground, they dreaded the harsh winter they must suffer. They were huddled together on the edge of the marshes, and the autumn rains that fell in torrents after the battle flooded their tents with mud and water, which immediately froze because of the coldness of the weather. In the midst of these hardships news arrived of the disaster which had overtaken them at sea. Brutus's fleet had attacked and destroyed a large convoy of reinforcements which had been sent out from Italy, and the few survivors who escaped the enemy were compelled by hunger to eat the sails and tackle of their ships.²⁴¹ When Antony and Octavian heard of this, they were eager to force an action and decide the issue before Brutus discovered how great a success he had won. It so happened that the battles at sea and on land had been fought on the same day,²⁴² but by some mischance rather than by the fault of the naval commanders no news of their victory reached Brutus's camp²⁴³ until twenty days after the event. If he had known this, he would not have ventured upon a second battle, since his army was well stocked with supplies for a long while, he held the advantage of the ground in that his camp was not exposed to the wintry weather and was almost impregnable on the side facing the enemy, and besides all this the knowledge that he held complete control of the sea and had defeated the troops opposed to him on land had filled him with confidence and high hopes.

But the day of the Republic was past, it would seem, and it was necessary that the rule of a single man²⁴⁴ should take its place, and so

the gods, wishing to remove from the scene the only man who could hinder the potential master of the world, cut off any chance that the news might reach Brutus in time, although it came very close to doing so. On the very evening before the final battle, a man named Clodius²⁴⁵ deserted from the enemy and brought word that Octavian's side had heard of the destruction of his fleet, and that this was the reason for their haste to fight it out. However, no one believed his story and he was not even admitted into Brutus's presence, but was generally despised as a rumour-monger who had either heard some idle report or had deliberately invented a falsehood to win himself favour.

48. On that night, it is said, the phantom again visited Brutus: it appeared in the same shape, but departed without a word. Publius Volumnius, who was a philosopher and who had served with Brutus in all his campaigns,²⁴⁶ makes no mention of this portent, but he says that the leading standard was covered with a swarm of bees, that the arm of one of the officers exuded oil of roses,²⁴⁷ and that although they often rubbed it and wiped the moisture away, this had no effect. He also reports that just before the battle itself two eagles met and fought in the space between the two camps, that both armies gazed at them while an extraordinary silence descended upon the plain and that finally the eagle on Brutus's side gave up the fight and flew away. There is also the well-known story of the Ethiopian who encountered the standard-bearer just as the gate of the camp was thrown open, and who was cut down by the soldiers because they believed his appearance signified a bad omen.

49. After Brutus had led out his forces in battle order and formed them up against the enemy, he waited for some time because, as he was reviewing the troops, he began to feel suspicious of some and heard accusations made against others. He also noticed that the cavalry showed no great enthusiasm to begin the attack, but were persistently waiting to see what the infantry would do. Then suddenly a man named Camulatus, a fine soldier whom Brutus had decorated for his courage, rode out of the ranks and went over to the enemy. Brutus was very distressed at the sight, and partly out of anger, partly because he was afraid of treachery or desertion on an even greater scale, launched his attack at about three o'clock in the afternoon.²⁴⁸ In his own sector of the battlefield he immediately overcame the enemy and pressed forward, driving his opponents' left wing before him. His cavalry also moved up in support of the infantry, and as soon as they saw the enemy in disorder charged against them. His other wing, however, was extended by its commanders to prevent its being outflanked by the enemy who outnumbered it, and the result was to

leave the middle part of this sector so thinly manned that it could not hold its ground, but was the first to break and take to flight. The enemy cut their way through the left wing, and then at once encircled Brutus.

Faced with this crisis, he showed all the virtues of a general and a soldier, both in his personal prowess and in his handling of the battle, as he fought to wrest victory from the enemy. But the factor that had told in his favour in the earlier engagement now worked against him. On that occasion the part of the enemy's army which had been defeated had been quickly annihilated, but this time when Cassius's troops were routed only a few of them were killed, and the fugitives, who had become quite demoralized by their earlier defeats, now infected the greater part of the army with their own terror and confusion. It was in this action that Marcus, the son of Cato, was killed, fighting among the bravest and noblest of the young men. He fought on until he was exhausted and refused to surrender or to fly, but still wielding his sword and shouting aloud that he was Cato's son, he fell dead upon a heap of enemy corpses.²⁴⁹ The bravest men in the rest of the army were also killed as they fought to defend Brutus.

50. Among Brutus's close friends was a man of exceptional courage named Lucilius.²⁵⁰ When he saw a group of barbarian horsemen paying no attention to any other quarry but riding at full speed for Brutus, he determined to stop them at the risk of his own life, and so, letting himself fall a little way behind, he shouted to them that he was Brutus. He convinced the barbarians, because he asked them to lead him to Antony, and it was plausible enough that he should have confidence in him but would be afraid of Octavian. They were delighted at their discovery, and thinking themselves fortunate beyond belief, they led Lucilius along, and as it was now growing dark, they sent ahead some messengers to warn Antony. Antony was also pleased at the news and went to meet the escort, and the rest of his troops, when they heard that Brutus was being brought in alive, ran up to see him, some of them pitying his ill fortune, and others thinking him unworthy of his reputation in yielding so far to his love of life as to let himself be taken prisoner by barbarians. As they approached, Antony halted, as he felt uncertain as to how he should receive Brutus. But Lucilius, when he was led forward, spoke out boldly and declared, 'Antony, no enemy has taken Marcus Brutus prisoner, and none ever will. May Fortune never gain that victory over virtue. When you find Brutus, whether he is alive or dead, he will be worthy of himself. I tricked your soldiers into bringing me here, and however severely you decide to punish me, I am ready.' When Lucilius had confessed this to the amazement of his hearers, Antony turned to

the men who had captured him and said, 'I expect you are angry at your mistake and think you have been made to look fools. But believe me you have laid hands on a prey that is worth far more than the one you were hunting. You went out to look for an enemy, and you have brought me back a friend. By the gods, I do not know how I could have treated Brutus if you had brought him here alive, but I know that I would rather have such a man as Lucilius for a friend than an enemy.' With these words he embraced Lucilius and entrusted him to the care of one of his friends. Later on he employed him and found him for ever afterwards a loyal and faithful comrade.²⁵¹

51. Meanwhile, Brutus had crossed a stream which was shaded by trees and overhung by steep banks, and since it was already dark he would go no farther, but sat down with a few officers and friends²⁵² in a place where the ground had been hollowed out and had a great rock in front of it. Then he gazed above him at the star-filled heavens, and recited two verses, one of which Volumnius has recorded –

See, Zeus, who is the author of these ills ...²⁵³

– but the other he says he has forgotten.²⁵⁴ Then after a little he uttered the names of each of his friends whom he had seen killed defending him in the battle, and he sighed most heavily when he came to Labeo²⁵⁵ and Flavius, the first of whom was his legate and the second his chief of engineers.²⁵⁶ Just then one of his attendants felt thirsty, and seeing that Brutus was in the same plight, he picked up a helmet and ran down to the stream. Suddenly they heard a noise from the opposite direction and Volumnius²⁵⁷ went out to reconnoitre, taking Dardanus his shield-bearer with him. After a while they came back and asked for some water to drink. 'It has all been drunk,' replied Brutus and smiled significantly, 'but we shall fetch you some more.' The same man who had brought it at first was sent out again, but this time he almost fell into the enemy's hands was wounded, and only escaped with great difficulty.

Now Brutus still reckoned that he had not lost many men in the battle, and another of his friends, Statilius,²⁵⁸ offered to make his way through the enemy's lines to Brutus's camp, for there was no other way of reaching it. There he would reconnoitre the position, and if all was well he would raise a blazing torch and return. He arrived there safely and the torch was raised. After this a long time passed and there was no sign of him, but Brutus said, 'If Statilius is alive, he will come back.' But on his way back he fell into the enemy's hands and was killed.

52. The night was now far spent, and as Brutus sat on the ground, he

leaned across to his servant Cleitus and spoke to him. Cleitus made no reply but burst into tears, whereupon Brutus took his shield-bearer Dardanus aside and spoke to him in private. Lastly, he turned to Volumnius²⁵⁹ and, addressing him in Greek, appealed to his philosophical doctrines and training, and begged him to hold his sword and help him drive it home. But Volumnius refused and so did all the rest, and one of them declared that they must wait no longer, but make their escape. At this Brutus jumped up and answered, 'Yes, we must escape, but this time with our hands, not our feet.' Then, after taking each one of them by the hand, he smiled and said that he was filled with a great joy because not one of his friends had failed him, and as for fortune, he blamed her only for his country's sake. He believed that fate had been kinder to him than to the victors, and not only in the past but in the present, since he was leaving behind him a reputation for virtue which his conquerors, for all their arms or their wealth, would never rival, and the world would never get the impression that wicked and unscrupulous men who put to death the good and the just could go on to exercise an unjust rule. Then, after urging them to save themselves, he walked a little distance away with two or three of his companions, among whom was Strato,²⁶⁰ who had become one of his closest friends since the time of his studies of rhetoric. He placed Strato next to him, and then, grasping his naked sword by the hilt with both hands, he threw himself upon it and died. Some say that it was not Brutus himself but Strato who at his insistence held the sword in front of him, turning his eyes away, and that Brutus then ran upon it with such force that it transfixed his breast, killing him instantly.

53. Messala,²⁶¹ who had been one of Brutus's friends but then made his peace with Octavian, found a moment some time afterwards to present Strato to Octavian, and said with tears in his eyes, 'This is the man, Caesar, who did the last service for my dear friend Brutus.' Octavian took him into his service, and found Strato to be one of the Greeks in his entourage who showed great courage in the troubles that followed and in the war of Actium. And the story goes that Messala himself was later warmly praised by Octavian, for whereas at Philippi nobody had fought harder against the Caesarians for Brutus's sake, at Actium he proved himself utterly loyal to his new cause. At this Messala is said to have replied, 'Caesar, I have always fought on the better and juster side.'

When Antony found Brutus's body, he ordered it to be wrapped in the most costly of his scarlet cloaks, and afterwards when he discovered that the garment had been stolen, he had the thief put to death.²⁶² The ashes he sent home to Servilia,²⁶³ Brutus's mother.

As for Porcia, Brutus's wife, both Nicolaus the philosopher²⁶⁴ and Valerius Maximus²⁶⁵ tell the story that she now longed to end her life, but was prevented by her friends who sat with her and continually watched her. So she contrived to snatch up some live coals from the fire and swallowed them, keeping her mouth closed, and so suffocated herself and died. And yet there is also a letter from Brutus to his friends,²⁶⁶ in which he mourns Porcia's fate and reproaches them for it, because their neglect of her must have made her prefer death to the continuance of her illness. It would seem that Nicolaus is mistaken in the date of her death,²⁶⁷ for this letter, if it is really one of the genuine ones, gives us to understand that Brutus knew of Porcia's sickness, of her love for her husband and of the manner of her death.

COMPARISON OF DION AND BRUTUS

1 (54). So there is much to admire in both these men, in particular the contrast of the greatness they achieved and the slightness of the resources that were their starting-points.¹ This, indeed, is the category where Dion scores best. He had no rival as Brutus had in Cassius, a man who could not be trusted as much where virtue or glory was at stake, but whose daring and insight and actions contributed just as much to the war-effort: indeed, there are those who make Cassius the originator of the entire enterprise, and say that he was the moving-spirit of the plot against Caesar while Brutus was inactive. Dion in contrast collected everything himself for the deed, not just weapons and ships and manpower but also friends and collaborators. Nor did he acquire, as Brutus did, wealth and power from the circumstances of the war itself; instead, he contributed his own wealth for the fighting of the war, spending for the freedom of his fellow-citizens the money that was supposed to support his exile. There again, Brutus and Cassius did not have the option of inactivity once they had been driven out of their country, for they had been sentenced to death² and they were being chased down: so the war was essential for them, and when they entrusted their personal safety to their weapons, they were facing danger more on their own behalf than for their fellow-citizens. Dion, in contrast, was less in danger and had an easier life during his exile than the tyrant who had forced him out, yet he willingly took such immense risks in order to save Sicily.

2 (55). Nor was it a similar thing for Syracuse to get rid of Dionysius and for Rome to get rid of Caesar. The one man was undeniably a tyrant, and had filled Sicily with countless sufferings; whereas Caesar's rule caused some considerable trouble for its opponents while it was being established, but once people had accepted it and been defeated it seemed no more than a name and a semblance, with no consequences that were cruel or tyrannical.³ Indeed, it seemed as if the circumstances were calling for monarchy, and Caesar was Heaven's own gift to Rome as the gentlest possible doctor.⁴ For that reason the Roman people immediately missed Caesar and became harsh and implacable to his killers, whereas it was the decision to let Dionysius leave Syracuse⁵ and not to destroy the tomb of the earlier

tyrant⁶ that aroused most criticism among Dion's fellow-citizens.

3 (56). Let us turn to their achievements in war. There can be no criticism of Dion as a general: his own plans were very well judged and successful, and when he suffered reverses because of others' shortcomings he went on to retrieve and improve the situation. Brutus, in contrast, would seem both to have been ill advised in taking on the final decisive campaign⁷ and to have failed to correct matters when he had been defeated. Instead, he gave up and abandoned hope, and showed even less daring than Pompey in the way he reacted to fortune:⁸ and this was even though the military situation on land allowed plenty of reason for hope,⁹ while his fleet firmly dominated the entire sea.¹⁰

The biggest charge they lay against Brutus is that he had been saved by Caesar's generosity, had also been allowed to save as many of his fellow-prisoners as he wanted,¹¹ was thought to be his friend and favoured above many others, then became the murderer of his saviour. There is no such criticism that one could make of Dion: on the contrary, as long as he was on good terms of friendship with Dionysius he guided matters firmly and helped him to preserve the state, and it was only once he had been forced out of his country, had been wronged as a husband¹² and had lost his possessions¹³ that he openly took up a war that was legitimate and just.

Or is this the first point that tells the other way? The most praiseworthy element in the two men, their hostility to tyranny and their hatred of evil, is uncompromised and untainted in the case of Brutus, for he had no personal grievance with Caesar and was facing danger for the sake of the liberty of all. Dion, though, would not have fought if he had not suffered personally: that is made clear in Plato's letters,¹⁴ which show that it was his expulsion from the tyranny, not any rejection of it, that led him to destroy Dionysius. And it was the common good that led Brutus to become the friend of his enemy Pompey¹⁵ and to become Caesar's enemy instead: his sole criterion of hostility and friendship was justice. Dion gave great support to Dionysius from goodwill while they were firm friends, and once he lost Dionysius's trust he fought against him in anger. For that reason not even Dion's friends were wholly confident that once he had removed Dionysius he would not establish his own rule, beguiling the citizens with some softer name than 'tyrant'.¹⁶ In Brutus's case, even his enemies were heard to say that he was the only one of Caesar's attackers who had kept a single aim from beginning to end, the restoration of the Roman Republic.¹⁷

4 (57). Anyway, taking on Caesar was a quite different matter from taking on Dionysius. No one who knew Dionysius would have had any

respect for this man who spent most of his time drinking, gambling and womanizing. But even to conceive of overthrowing Caesar and not to fear his ability, power and fortune – this man whose very name was enough to make the kings of Parthia and India lose their sleep – was the mark of an outstanding soul that could never falter in fear. For that reason, the simple appearance of Dion in Sicily was enough to rally many tens of thousands against Dionysius;¹⁸ Caesar's fame guided his friends to success even after his death, and his name raised its holder¹⁹ from a defenceless child to become the first man at Rome, as if he had put it on as a protective charm against the hostility and power of Antony.²⁰

If someone says that Dion expelled the tyrant only after great struggles, whereas Brutus struck down Caesar when he was unarmed and unprotected, it was itself a mark of consummate intelligence and strategic planning to catch unprotected and unarmed a man who had surrounded himself with such power. For he did not attack and kill Caesar suddenly, nor alone, nor with just a few associates: he had put the plan together a long time before and he attacked him along with many others, none of whom let him down: either he had picked the best people from the outset, or by choosing the ones he did he turned those he trusted into good men. Dion either chose badly and entrusted himself to men who were worthless, or else he treated them in such a way as to turn good people into bad.²¹ Neither of these should happen to a man of wisdom. Plato too finds fault with him for choosing friends who destroyed him.²²

5 (58). Once Dion was dead, no one avenged him; but of Brutus's enemies, Antony buried him with respect, while Octavian preserved the honours he had gained. For there was a bronze statue in Mediolanum in Cisalpine Gaul, a good likeness and a piece of impressive craftsmanship. Some time later Octavian²³ saw this. He walked past, then stopped a little further on. In many people's hearing, he called upon the magistrates: 'I have caught the city out in breaking the terms of the peace,' he said, 'for you are harbouring my enemy.' At first they understandably denied it: they looked at one another in puzzlement, not realizing who it was that he meant. Then Octavian turned to the statue, furrowed his brow and said, 'Is this not my enemy standing here?' This discountenanced them even more, and they fell silent. Then Octavian's face broke into a smile; he praised the Gauls for remaining true to their friends even in misfortune, and gave instructions for the statue to remain where it was.²⁴

ANTONY

INTRODUCTION TO ANTONY

The proem to *Demetrius and Antony* suggests that this pair offers something which, if not entirely different from the rest of the series, at least belongs at one end of its moral range. A good craftsman is trained not merely to recognize what is good but also what is bad and needs to be avoided; the same goes for virtue. The Spartans used to get their serfs drunk at a festival, then put them on display to the young men to show the evils of drink. That is excessive and inhumane,

but on the same principle it may serve as a useful example in my Lives if I include one or two pairs of men who have been careless of their reputations, and who because they exercised supreme power or were engaged in great enterprises made themselves conspicuous by their misconduct. My purpose in doing so is certainly not to divert or entertain my readers by giving variety to my writings. I am rather following the example of Ismenias the Theban, who when he taught the flute used to show his pupils both good and bad performers, and tell them, 'You should play like this one', or 'You should not play like that one'. Antigenidas went further and believed that young men would appreciate good flute-players better if they were given experience of bad ones. In the same way it seems to me that we shall be all the more ready to study and imitate the lives of good men if we know something of those of the wicked and infamous.

This book, then, will contain the lives of Demetrius, nicknamed the Besieger of Cities, and Antony the general, men whose lives conspicuously illustrate the truth of Plato's saying that great natures produce great vices as well as great virtues.¹ Both men were redoubtable womanizers, drinkers and fighters, both were open-handed, extravagant and arrogant, and these resemblances were reflected in the similarities of their fortunes. During their careers they met with prodigious triumphs and disasters, conquered great empires and as easily lost them, rose to the heights of success as unexpectedly as they plumbed the depths of failure, and ended their lives the one as a prisoner of his enemies, and the other narrowly escaping the same fate.

(*Demetr.* 1)

So these Lives will figure among 'one or two' pairs providing negative examples. (*Coriolanus and Alcibiades* is the pair which scholars most often suggest might go along with this, though there might be other

candidates too, *Nicias and Crassus* perhaps or *Pyrrhus and Marius*.) Not that the more regular ‘positive’ moral examples are without their negative sides: within this volume there is the excessive ambition of the Gracchi, the darker elements in the later years of Sertorius or Lucullus, the damaging over-punctiliousness of the younger Cato and the scar on Brutus’s reputation of his treatment of Thessalonica and Sparta.² But still Plutarch marks out *Demetrius and Antony* as striking a different note, so much so that an incautious reader might think it a matter of introducing ‘variety’. It is not that, Plutarch insists: it is rather that he is developing a similar moral programme in a different way, this time by showing what to avoid rather than what to admire and emulate.

The characteristics picked out in the proem are indeed largely unattractive ones – both men were ‘redoubtable womanizers, drinkers and fighters, both were open-handed, extravagant and arrogant’ – even if the warlike qualities and the generosity will be seen to have positive aspects as well. The better qualities are on the whole left for the narrative itself to suggest, the two men’s resilience to fortune for instance or Demetrius’s creditable attachment to Greek liberty, and are partly reprised in the comparative epilogue. Still, even that epilogue is more concerned to weigh bad qualities in the one man against their even worse counterparts in the other, and Antony’s failings are not there spared: his power-hungriness, his hostility to liberty, his incapacity to separate business and pleasure, his multiple marriages, his murderous role in the proscriptions, and particularly his desertion of his men – all these are aspects where he comes out the worse of the two, whereas it is only in Antony’s humbler beginnings, in his more excusable treachery, in Demetrius’s more spectacularly public wantonness and in the circumstances of their deaths that Antony comes out better.

Tones of denunciation have hardly been lacking in the narrative either. Men of principle

were disgusted at [Antony’s] ill-timed drunkenness, his extravagant spending, his cavortings with women, his days spent in sleeping off his debauches, or wandering about with an aching head and befuddled wits, and his nights spent in revels, or watching lavish spectacles, or attending the wedding feast of some actor or comedian.

(*Ant.* 9)

As for the proscriptions,

I can conceive of nothing more savage or vindictive than this trafficking in blood. At the end of all this bartering of one death for another, they were just as guilty of the murder of the men whom they abandoned as of those whom they seized; but the wrong which they did to their friends was the more unforgivable

of the two, since they killed them without even hating them.

(Ant. 20)

And the results were catastrophic:

Caesar's regime, which appeared to be anything but tyrannical as far as he himself was concerned, was made unpopular by his friends, and of these it was Antony who wielded the greatest power, and hence was considered the worst offender.

(Ant. 6)

Still, just as Plutarch's more 'positive' Lives are not free of negative features, so *Demetrius* and *Antony* are not free of positive ones. In particular, the many twists and turns of fortune are a recurrent theme especially in *Demetrius*,³ and both men receive some praise for their ability to cope with these and, particularly in Antony's case, to continue to give strong leadership in adversity. He may still not qualify for the description 'good', but he comes close, for

it was characteristic of Antony to show his finest qualities in the hour of trial, and indeed it was always when his fortunes were at their lowest that he came nearest to being a good man. It is a common experience for men who are brought down by some overpowering catastrophe to understand what virtue is, but it is rare for people to find the strength to emulate the qualities they admire and to rid themselves of the vices they condemn: on the contrary, many people become so discouraged by adversity that they give way to their accustomed habits all the more and allow their judgement to collapse. At any rate, on this occasion Antony set a wonderful example to his soldiers. In spite of all the luxury and extravagance of his recent life, he could bring himself without difficulty to drink foul water and eat wild fruits and roots. And during the crossing of the Alps, we are told, the army was reduced even to devouring the bark of trees and creatures that no man had ever tasted before.

(Ant. 17)

In particular, after Cleopatra's entrance (ch. 26), much less time is spent in denouncing Antony's faults. It is not that these are forgotten; it is rather that they can be taken for granted, and more attention can be given to seeing *why* he is so vulnerable to Cleopatra's charms. That requires some revision of the more uncompromisingly negative impression a reader will have formed of Antony's earlier outrages, when he was so much to blame for the sorry state of the city in Julius Caesar's absence (chs. 6, 9, 12) and for the proscriptions (chs. 19–20). It is not unusual for Plutarch to begin by characterizing his figures straightforwardly, and to revise and renounce that presentation as he proceeds: this is an extreme example, for, with a new set of outrages in Asia Minor, we now discover that

he was completely ignorant of much that was done in his name, not so much

because he was lazy as because he was simple enough to trust his subordinates. His character was, in fact, essentially simple and he was slow to perceive the truth. Once he recognized that he was at fault, he was full of repentance and ready to admit his errors to those he had wronged. Whenever he had to punish an offence or right an injustice, he acted on the grand scale, and it was generally considered that he overstepped the bounds far more often in the rewards he bestowed than in the punishments he inflicted.

(*Ant.* 24)

And, that passage goes on, his readiness to exchange jokes and banter with his companions, something identified earlier (ch. 4) as a great strength in the bonds it built with his men, also left Antony desperately open to the techniques used by his flatterers. This flattery is another theme shared with *Demetrius*, which several times pronounced on the disastrous effect that the flatterers had on the king's behaviour, indeed on the whole Hellenistic world. When the first person hailed Demetrius and his father as 'kings', for instance, it set a disastrous trend: 'such was the effect of a single word from a flatterer, which in this way brought about a revolution throughout the world' (*Demetr.* 18).

Cleopatra is the most subtle flatterer of them all: 'Plato speaks of four kinds of flattery, but Cleopatra knew many more' (*Ant.* 29). Her hallmarks are 'charm and subtlety' (ch. 24). That 'subtlety' (Greek *panourgia*) is literally the capacity and willingness to 'do anything and everything', so different from the 'simple' Antony who has only his one way, brash and soldierly, to behave. No wonder he was 'ravished' (ch. 28), a word often used of real military pillaging, but here the captain is out of his depth. Things start going wrong now that all that boisterous playfulness is shared, not with his men, but with his mistress. Of course he is culpable, and we are not allowed to forget it: the result of his junketing in Alexandria is that he misses valuable military opportunities and leaves his brother and his wife to deal with a dangerous crisis (ch. 28). Yet the emphasis falls on how this could come about, and in particular how, psychologically, Antony could be so susceptible. That dimension grows even greater after his marriage to Octavia (ch. 31), the Roman matron who is foil to Cleopatra's exotic eastern queen, and a rival for Antony's affections who is always admirable – and always going to lose. The path is laid to the disgrace and desolation of Actium, when Antony hoists his sails and leaves the men who are dying for his sake, then sits alone, head in hands, in the bows of Cleopatra's ship, bewildered and ashamed (ch. 67).

Cleopatra too deepens as the Life progresses. At first she is simply this consummate flatterer, perfectly gauging her victim. She 'saw that Antony's humour was broad and gross and belonged to the soldier rather than the courtier, and she quickly adopted the same manner

towards him and treated him without the least reserve' (ch. 27). After Antony's catastrophe in Parthia (chs. 37–50), her devastating techniques are finely drawn, as she sees the danger that he might return to Octavia.

She pretended to be consumed with the most passionate love for Antony, adopted a rigorous diet and succeeded in making her body waste away. Whenever Antony came near her she would fix her eyes on him with a look of rapture, and whenever he left her appearance would give hints that she was languishing and on the verge of collapse. She took great pains to arrange that he should often see her in tears, and then she would quickly wipe them away and try to hide them as if she did not wish him to notice ...

(Ant. 53)

Her troupe of flattering supporters join in too, asking Antony to reflect on what it must be like for her:

Octavia, they made out, had married him as a matter of political convenience to suit her brother's interests, and she enjoyed the title of his wife: but Cleopatra, who was the sovereign of many nations, had been content to be called his lover, and she did not shun this name nor think it unworthy of her so long as she could see him and spend her life with him, but if he drove her away it would be the death of her.

(Ant. 53)

This is a rare and remarkable attempt in a male ancient author to adopt a female perspective, but it is all a matter of pretence: these are, indeed, the flatterers' *techniques*, not necessarily anything more. But as the end approaches it becomes more and more difficult to gauge what Cleopatra is really thinking or trying to do. There are hints of faithlessness to Antony and self-seeking approaches to Octavian, but they are left as that, mere hints: other authors are more clear-cut (nn. 346, 356). Yet, with Antony dead, the depth of Cleopatra's love becomes clear. At his tomb she laments, begging to die here in Egypt. Do not, Antony, betray your wife while she lives – 'your wife' now, no mere lover or mistress. Do not let yourself 'be triumphed over in my person' – self-seeking of course, but by now that self is a double one, for the fates of Cleopatra and Antony have become one.

Hide me and let me be buried here with you, for I know now that the thousand griefs I have suffered are as nothing beside the few days that I have lived without you.

(Ant. 84)

Sentimentality? Of course. But there can be good and bad sentimentality, and it is a cloddish reader who fails to be moved by this and by the death-scene that follows. The Mediterranean world has

been at stake as Octavian and Antony have fought, and the empire is on its way: 'fate had decreed that everything should come round to Octavian' (ch. 56). But we do not need to like Octavian for it, and his cold, calculating demeanour at the end does not attract. By now, it is a love-story above all.

So: deep emotional engagement with a great figure at the moment of downfall, yet also an awareness that the downfall is not random or even unjust, that the collapsing world of a person may be largely the consequence of his or her own failings, and even that the failings may be a necessary concomitant of the greatness ... It is natural for a modern reader to think in terms of 'the tragic' with such a tale. And, of course, Shakespeare found the stuff of tragedy in *Antony*: more on this below. Plutarch thought of tragedy too, and time and again the pair *Demetrius and Antony* borrows imagery from the theatre. That flatterer who hailed Antigonus and Demetrius as 'king' started a trend that corrupted the Successors 'as if they were tragic actors', changing their costume and their style (*Demetr.* 18); Demetrius's favourite courtesan, Lamia, is dismissed by an enemy as a 'whore on a tragic stage', and she introduces a moment of 'comedy' in the middle of 'tragedy' (chs. 25, 28); the Macedonians saw Pyrrhus alone as a worthy successor of Alexander, while 'the others, and especially Demetrius, only imitated Alexander in the pomp and outward show of majesty, like actors on a stage. And, indeed, it is true that there was something intensely stagey about Demetrius' (ch. 41), especially in his elaborate wardrobe that included a spectacular cloak which he later laid aside, 'just as if he were an actor rather than a real king' (ch. 44). Eventually his funeral was 'dramatic and theatrical' (ch. 53). The Life ends:

So now that the Macedonian drama has been performed, it is time to bring the Roman on to the stage.

(*Demetr.* 53)

A good deal of that dwells on what we would indeed call the 'theatrical' rather than the 'tragic' – the showiness, the dressing up, the glamour, the spectacle; but it portends catastrophe too, and this Roman drama of Antony develops some of the same themes. Antony wears his comic mask for Alexandria, leaving the tragic one for Rome (*Ant.* 29, cf. *Galb.* 12); on campaign an important tactic 'makes a dramatic spectacle' (ch. 45); the Donations of Alexandria strike the Roman public 'as an arrogant and theatrical gesture which seemed to indicate a hatred for his own country' (ch. 54). Finally, 'he took himself off', the last words of the comparative epilogue. The first Life sets the pattern: Demetrius is a showy figure, and his lack of substance is eventually shown to be what it is. There is more depth in Antony,

and he does intermittently tear himself away from Cleopatra and try to assert himself as a general; but the moral pattern is too strong, and eventually he falls into a similar fate.

Some of Plutarch's source material would have presented a much cruder portrait. In particular, he knew Octavian's *Memoirs*, and makes some use of them in this Life (chs. 22, 68) as he does in *Brutus* (Intro. *Brut.*). Octavian clearly did not hold back in his attacks on Antony in those *Memoirs*, alleging for instance that 'Antony had given orders that his legions should be on guard duty for Cleopatra and obey her every nod and order' (*FGrH* fr. 14 P. = 16 M. = 9 Smith); when Plutarch comes to such material, he treats it with some reserve (chs. 58–9), and Octavian himself is not treated sympathetically when he reveals the alleged contents of Antony's will (ch. 58). One of the will's provisions, Octavian stressed with particular indignation, was that Antony should be buried along with Cleopatra: yet when we reach that point of the narrative most readers will regard that partnership in death as moving rather than outrageous (chs. 84–6). Plutarch knew how to treat the founder of the principate with a healthy reserve (cf. General Intro. I).

Another hostile source, and one which provided Plutarch with rather more material, was Cicero's *Second Philippic*. This is quoted in ch. 6 (n. 35), and seems to be behind several other passages early in the Life.⁴ There is no reason to doubt that Plutarch knows the speech at first hand, and he reworks it carefully: for instance, in ch. 2 he makes Antony a good deal more susceptible to Curio than Cicero had done, in a way that prepares the ground for Antony's later susceptibility to Fulvia and particularly Cleopatra. Circumstantial detail can also be added: a friend to hold the toga out for Antony to vomit into (ch. 9 and n. 58), a tent for Antony to share with Trebonius (ch. 13 and n. 79).⁵ And the material can be moved around, so that much of it is delayed to ch. 21, well after Cicero's death. There, Plutarch juxtaposes it with Antony's noble behaviour on the battlefield of Philippi (ch. 22), sharpening that contrast of private excess and brilliant ability that sums up so much of Antony's story.

Some material is also drawn from the source which Plutarch shares with Appian, probably Asinius Pollio (General Intro. III), but less it seems than for *Younger Cato* and *Brutus* and much less than for *Pompey* and *Caesar*. It may be that Pollio did not continue his History down to Actium, but it is more likely that Plutarch found other, more specialized material more useful for this Life. Some of that may be drawn from 'Dellius the historian' (ch. 59 and n. 286), who is also named at ch. 25 as the envoy who initially encouraged Cleopatra to come to Antony: here as elsewhere (e.g. *Flam.* 21, Polybius; *Cato* 27 with n. 132, Munatius; *Brut.* 2, 13, 53, Empylus, Bibulus and Messala), the naming may be a coded invitation to the reader to infer his use as

a source. We know that Delliis wrote of the Parthian War (Strabo 11.13.3); a further work was also in circulation, enticingly entitled 'Sexy letters to Cleopatra' (Seneca *Suasoriae* 1.7). If he wrote after his defection to Octavian's side (ch. 59) – likely enough, but not certain – these may have been a contribution to the propaganda war (n. 262), or may simply have been a salaciously triumphant publication after Cleopatra's defeat. He does not sound a sober writer.

As in other instances of particularly fine story-telling (the Philippi campaign in *Brutus*, for instance), the final chapters have an unusually large proportion of material not found in other sources. At ch. 77 Plutarch quotes 'Those who were present', and so we should suspect an eyewitness source (n. 359); at ch. 82 he then cites Cleopatra's doctor Olympos 'in a history of these events which he has published' (n. 371), and some of the details might suggest authentic medical observation (e.g. the 'pinprick' snakebites, ch. 86 and n. 378).

Here, more than in any other of the Parallel Lives, the use of oral sources is also important (cf. General Intro. III). Two particularly fine tales are explicitly attributed to stories passed down within Plutarch's own family: the lavish banqueting in Alexandria (ch. 28) and the sufferings of Greece during the Actium campaign (ch. 68). Greece is also prominent elsewhere in the Life, for instance in its appreciation of Antony's displays of philhellenism (chs. 23, 33) – though Plutarch also stresses the sufferings of the Greek cities of Asia Minor (ch. 24). Not much of this material is found in other sources, and here too he may be relying on traditions that were still current 150 years after the events.

Partly thanks to this rich variety of source material and partly, doubtless, thanks to his own vivid imagination, Plutarch here produces one of the most visual of his Lives. Scenes such as Cleopatra's barge, or the hoisting of the dying Antony, or the magnificent tableau of the queen's death (chs. 26, 77, 85) were all welcome to Shakespeare as he reshaped the final three-quarters of the Life into dramatic form for *Antony and Cleopatra*; in other ways too he can be seen as responding to suggestions in Plutarch's own text, for instance in the way that Cleopatra's barge is only the first in a series of memorable maritime scenes that track Antony's greatness and then his catastrophe – the banqueting on Sextus's galley (ch. 32), then the shame of Actium (chs. 64–7). Shakespeare's distinctive alterations are themselves instructive. He plays down Dionysus, so important in Plutarch's Life (esp. chs. 24, 26, 60, 75), and makes even more than Plutarch does of Heracles (ch. 4): to a Jacobean audience Dionysus would have suggested the more boisterous Roman Bacchus and the drunken partying – an element in Antony's Dionysus, but the Greek god is more complex, with the suggestions of destructiveness and

cruelty as well as release and ecstasy (n. 142). Shakespeare also develops Enobarbus as a soldierly type, whose devotion to Antony and then disillusion again map the man's decline: this is Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, whose role in the Life is small though suggestive (chs. 40 with n. 225, 56, 63). This too can be seen as a version of a theme present in Plutarch, the devotion and then disillusion of Antony's troops (chs. 4, 43, 64, 68); it may also convey a sense of Antony's increasing unworthiness of his own soldierly past, with Enobarbus as a sort of alter ego, a lesser counterpart of what Antony himself once had been.

There is evidently much more to be said about Shakespeare's reworking of Plutarch's material, especially the two characters of Antony and Cleopatra themselves: on the whole *Antony and Cleopatra* keeps closer to the themes and emphases of this Life than *Julius Caesar* keeps to Plutarch's *Caesar* and *Brutus*, though Shakespeare's Antony does not quite show the *simplicity* that is so important in Plutarch, even if he is less shrewd and manipulative in this play than in *Julius Caesar*.⁶ Shakespeare's use of Plutarch is discussed more fully in the introduction to my commentary on the Life (see Further Reading below), and another discussion, with more recent bibliography, is now given by Denis Feeney.⁷

ANTONY

[83–30 BCE]

1. Mark Antony's grandfather was Antonius the orator,¹ who took the side of Sulla in the Civil Wars and was put to death by Marius. His father, who received the surname Creticus,² did not become famous nor make any great mark in public life, but was remembered rather for his benevolence, his honesty and especially his generosity,³ as may be judged by the following episode. He was by no means rich, and for this reason his wife was inclined to restrain his philanthropic impulses. So when one of his friends came to ask him for money, he had none to offer: instead, he ordered a young slave to fetch some water in a silver bowl, and when it arrived he moistened his face as though he were about to shave. He then dismissed the slave on some other pretext, presented his friend with the bowl and urged him to make what use he could of it. Later, when he saw that a thorough search was being made among the slaves, and that his wife was angry and intended to interrogate them one by one, Antonius confessed what he had done and begged her forgiveness.

2. His wife Julia⁴ belonged to the family of the Caesars and could take her place among the best and wisest women of her time. It was under her care that Antony was brought up, and after his father's death she married Cornelius Lentulus,⁵ who joined the conspiracy of Catiline and was executed by Cicero. This seems to have been the origin and the reason for the bitter animosity which Antony felt towards Cicero. At any rate Antony says⁶ that Cicero refused even to hand over Lentulus's body for burial until Julia had begged this concession from his wife. But everyone agrees that this accusation is false, since none of those who were executed at that time by Cicero was denied burial.

In his youth, it is said, Antony gave promise of a brilliant future, but then he became a close friend of Curio and this association seems to have fallen like a blight upon his career.⁷ Curio was a man who had become wholly enslaved to the demands of pleasure, and, in order to make Antony more pliable to his will, he plunged him into a life of drinking bouts, love-affairs and extravagant and profligate spending. The consequence was that Antony quickly ran up debts of an enormous size for so young a man, the sum involved being 250

talents.⁸ Curio provided security for the whole of this amount, but his father heard of it and forbade Antony his house. Antony then attached himself for a short while to Clodius,⁹ the most unrestrained and detestable of all the demagogues of his time, and took part in the campaigns of violence which at that time were throwing political affairs at Rome into chaos. But he soon grew tired of Clodius's crazy intrigues and alarmed at the strength of the opposition which they aroused, and he therefore left Italy for Greece, where he devoted himself to military training and to the study of public speaking, adopting what was known as the Asianic style.¹⁰ This type of oratory was just then at the height of its popularity, and indeed had much in common with Antony's own mode of life, which was boastful and blustering and full of empty bravado and uneven pretension.

3. During his stay in Greece he was invited by Gabinius, a man of consular rank,¹¹ to accompany the Roman force which was about to sail for Syria. Antony declined to join him in a private capacity, but when he was offered the command of the cavalry he agreed to serve in the campaign. His first operations were directed against Aristobulus,¹² who was leading a revolt of the Jews. On this occasion Antony was the first man to scale the highest part of the enemy's fortifications, and he drove Aristobulus from all his positions. Then he engaged him, routed a greatly superior force with a handful of men and killed all but a few of his opponents. Aristobulus and his son were both taken prisoner.

After this campaign was over, Gabinius was approached by Ptolemy Auletes,¹³ who appealed to him to join forces, invade Egypt and recover his kingdom, for which services he offered a bribe of 10,000 talents. The majority of the Roman officers were opposed to the plan, but Gabinius, although he was reluctant to go to war, was captivated by the vision of the 10,000 talents. Antony, on the other hand, who longed to undertake some ambitious enterprise, was eager to do what Ptolemy wanted, and so he threw his weight on to the king's side and persuaded Gabinius to join him. The general opinion was that the greatest danger lay not so much in the fighting as in the march to Pelusium,¹⁴ since the Romans would have to pass through deep sand and a completely waterless region, past the Channel and the Serbonian marshes.¹⁵ The Egyptians call this region Typhon's breathing-hole, but it is probable that the swamp consists of water which was originally left behind by the Red Sea, together with some subterranean infiltration at the point where the isthmus dividing it from the Mediterranean is at its narrowest. However, when Antony was ordered to advance with the cavalry, he not only occupied the isthmus, but also seized the large city of Pelusium and captured its

garrison, thus securing the line of march for the main Roman force and laying a foundation for the campaign on which his commander could base confident hopes of victory. And on this occasion even the enemy profited from Antony's love of honour. As soon as King Ptolemy arrived in Pelusium, he was so overcome by his anger and resentment that he was about to carry out a massacre of the Egyptians, but Antony stepped in and prevented him. There followed a whole series of hard-fought battles, in which time and again Antony gave proof of his courage and of a foresight that marked him out as a true leader. The most remarkable of these exploits was the operation in which by wheeling his own force he succeeded in outflanking the enemy and enveloping them from the rear, and so enabled the Roman troops who were attacking from the front to win the battle. He received suitable decorations and honours for all these feats, and the Egyptian people were especially impressed by the humanity which he showed to the dead Archelaus.¹⁶ Although Antony had been his personal friend and guest, circumstances had forced him to make war upon this prince during his lifetime, but when he had been killed Antony sought out his body and had it buried with royal honours.¹⁷ In consequence, he left a great name behind him among the Alexandrians, while his comrades in the Roman army looked up to him as a brilliant soldier.

4. Besides these qualities there was a gentlemanly dignity about Antony's appearance. His beard was well grown, his forehead broad, his nose aquiline, and these features combined to give him a masculine look that resembled the statues and portraits of Hercules. In fact there was an ancient tradition that the blood of the Heracleidae ran in Antony's family, since they claimed descent from Anton, one of the sons of Hercules,¹⁸ and Antony liked to believe that his own physique lent force to the legend. He also deliberately cultivated it in his choice of dress, for whenever he was going to appear before a large number of people he wore his tunic belted low over the hips, a large sword at his side and a heavy cloak. And indeed it was these same 'Herculean' qualities that seemed vulgar to other people – his swaggering air, his ribald talk, his fondness for carousing in public, sitting down by his men as they ate or taking his food standing at the common mess-table – which created such an affection and yearning for him among his troops. His weakness for the opposite sex also showed an attractive side of his character and won him much popular support, for he often helped others in their love-affairs and always accepted with good humour the jokes they made about his own. Besides this, his open-handed nature and the generosity with which he showered gifts upon his friends and his soldiers alike laid a splendid

foundation when he first set out upon the road to power, and when he had established himself these qualities raised his authority to still greater heights, even after he had begun to undermine it by innumerable acts of folly. I will quote one example of his liberality. He had given orders for 250,000 drachmas to be presented to one of his friends, a sum which the Romans call a *decies*.¹⁹ His steward was dumbfounded at this command, and in order to make Antony understand the sheer size of the gift, he had the money laid out in full view of his master. As Antony passed by, he asked what this heap of coins represented, and the steward then explained that this was the gift he had ordered for his friend. Antony saw that the man grudged the expense, and so he remarked: 'I thought a *decies* amounted to more than that. This is just a trifle: double it!'

5. But that episode belongs to a later date. At the time of which I am now speaking²⁰ the affairs of Rome had reached the brink of civil war, with the supporters of the elite ranging themselves under the leadership of Pompey, who was in the capital, while the people's supporters urged Caesar to come from Gaul, where he was already under arms. At this point Curio, the friend of Antony's younger days, who had himself changed sides and was now one of Caesar's supporters,²¹ persuaded Antony to join him. Curio's gifts as an orator gave him a powerful hold over the masses, and by making lavish use of the funds provided by Caesar, he secured Antony's election as tribune and later as augur,²² that is to say a priest whose duty it is to observe the flight of birds. Once in office, Antony quickly found ways to use his powers for the benefit of those who were managing affairs on Caesar's behalf. First of all he found that the consul Marcellus²³ was proposing not only to place under Pompey's command the forces which had already been raised,²⁴ but also to grant him powers to conscript new levies. Antony opposed this plan by introducing a decree²⁵ that the soldiers who had already been mobilized should sail for Syria to reinforce the army of Bibulus,²⁶ who was engaged in a campaign against the Parthians,²⁷ and that those whom Pompey was then recruiting should not serve under his command. On another occasion, when the senate refused either to receive Caesar's letters or to allow them to be read, Antony employed the powers vested in his office to read them out aloud himself,²⁸ and in this way he won many more supporters for Caesar's cause, because the letters gave the impression that his demands were no more than moderate and just. Finally, when two questions were laid before the senate, the first whether Pompey should disband his army, and the second whether Caesar should do the same, and when only a small minority voted that Pompey should disarm and the great majority that Caesar should do

so,²⁹ Antony then rose and asked whether it was the senate's opinion that both Pompey and Caesar should dismiss their troops.³⁰ This suggestion was received with great enthusiasm, and amid shouts of applause for Antony the senators demanded that the motion should be put to the vote. But the consuls refused to do so, and thereupon Caesar's supporters put forward a fresh set of proposals.³¹ These seemed equitable, but Cato opposed them violently, and then Lentulus, exercising his authority as consul, had Antony ejected from the senate.³² Antony responded by calling down many curses on his opponents' heads, after which he left the house. He disguised himself in a slave's clothes, and in the company of Quintus Cassius³³ hired a chariot and set out to join Caesar. As soon as they arrived they reported angrily that affairs at Rome were now in chaos, that even the tribunes of the people had been deprived of their freedom of speech and that anyone who raised his voice on behalf of justice was persecuted and went in danger of his life.

6. Caesar then invaded Italy with his army,³⁴ and it was for this reason that Cicero in his *Philippics*³⁵ wrote that Antony had been the cause of the Civil War, just as Helen had been of the Trojan War. But this is an obvious falsehood, for Gaius Caesar was not so easily influenced, neither was he the man to abandon his calculations on account of anger. The mere sight of Antony and Cassius dressed in rags and arriving at his camp in a hired chariot would never have persuaded him to make war upon his country on the spur of the moment, unless he had planned such an action long before.³⁶ On the contrary, Caesar had long been anxious to open hostilities, and this episode merely provided him with an excuse and a plausible pretext. The real motive which drove him to make war upon all mankind, just as it had urged Alexander before him and Cyrus long ago,³⁷ was an insatiable love of power and an insane desire to be the first and greatest man in the world, and this ambition could not be attained without destroying Pompey.

So Caesar advanced upon Rome, captured it and drove Pompey out of Italy.³⁸ He decided first of all to attack Pompey's forces in Spain, and later, when he had used this period to build a fleet, to cross the sea to Greece and fight Pompey there. Meanwhile, he left Rome to be governed by Lepidus, who was praetor,³⁹ while the command of the troops and the administration of Italy were entrusted to Antony, who was one of the tribunes of the people.⁴⁰ Antony quickly won the affections of the soldiers by joining them in their exercises, spending much of his time among them and providing gifts for them whenever the opportunity arose. The rest of the population, however, saw him in a very different light. He was too lazy to deal with complaints and

too impatient to listen to those who wanted to enlist his help, while at the same time he became notorious for his intrigues with other men's wives. In short, Caesar's regime, which appeared to be anything but tyrannical as far as he himself was concerned, was made unpopular by his friends,⁴¹ and of these it was Antony who wielded the greatest power, and hence was considered the worst offender.

7. In spite of this, when Caesar returned from Spain⁴² he ignored all the accusations that were brought against Antony. Instead, he made use of him for his campaigns, seeing in him an active and courageous soldier and a fine leader of men, and he was never disappointed in him.

Caesar himself now sailed from Brundisium with a small force, crossed the Ionian sea and sent back his transports with orders to Gabinius⁴³ and Antony to embark their troops and join him as quickly as possible in Macedonia.⁴⁴ Gabinius, however, was afraid to attempt the crossing, which was difficult in winter, and began to march his army round by the long route overland. Antony, on the other hand, was becoming more and more concerned for Caesar, as he was cut off amid a large enemy force. He managed to drive off Libo,⁴⁵ who was blockading the harbour at Brundisium, by surrounding his galleys with a large number of small boats, and he then embarked a force of twenty thousand infantry and eight hundred horsemen and put out to sea. The enemy sighted and pursued him, but he was rescued from this danger by a strong south wind blowing from the bay, which raised such a heavy swell that Libo's galleys wallowed in the trough of the waves and could make no headway. Antony, on the other hand, found that his ships were being driven towards a rock-bound shore and cliffs with deep water under them, from which there seemed to be no hope of escape. But suddenly the wind shifted to the south-west, and the swell began to move towards the open sea and allowed him to veer away from the shore. As he sailed proudly along he could see the beach strewn with wreckage, for the wind had driven his pursuers ashore, and many of their ships had been destroyed.⁴⁶ A great quantity of booty and many prisoners fell into Antony's hands. He then went on to capture the town of Lissus⁴⁷ and inspired Caesar with great confidence by arriving at the critical moment with such large reinforcements.

8. There followed a long period of continuous fighting, and in all these engagements Antony distinguished himself brilliantly. Twice when Caesar's troops were in headlong retreat he met them, stemmed the rout, forced them to turn and charge their pursuers and won a victory.⁴⁸ In consequence, his reputation with the army was second only to Caesar's, and Caesar left no doubt as to his own opinion of

Antony. When he was about to engage in the final and decisive battle at Pharsalus,⁴⁹ Caesar took charge of the right wing and gave the left to Antony as the most able commander in his army. And after the victory, when Caesar had been proclaimed dictator,⁵⁰ he himself pressed on to pursue Pompey, but he chose Antony as his master of horse and sent him to Rome.⁵¹ This appointment is the second in rank when the dictator is in the city, but when he is absent it represents the supreme and almost the only authority, for once a dictator has been chosen there remains only the tribunate; all the other offices of state are suspended.⁵²

9. But one of the tribunes at the time was Dolabella.⁵³ He was a young man, with a young man's revolutionary ambitions. He proposed a law for the cancellation of debts⁵⁴ and approached Antony – who was his friend and always eager to win the people's goodwill – to enlist his support. But Asinius and Trebellius⁵⁵ advised Antony against the scheme, and it so happened that at this moment he had reason to suspect that Dolabella was having an affair with his wife. Antony was enraged at this, drove his wife out of his house⁵⁶ – she was his cousin, her father being the Gaius Antonius who had been Cicero's colleague during his consulship⁵⁷ – and then, with the support of Asinius and his friends, prepared for open warfare with Dolabella. For Dolabella had already occupied the forum in order to force his measure through the assembly: so Antony, as soon as the senate had passed a resolution authorizing him to take up arms, advanced on the forum, joined battle, killed a number of Dolabella's men and lost some of his own. Through this action Antony forfeited his popularity with the people, while at the same time his course of life earned him the contempt of all men of principle; indeed, as Cicero explains,⁵⁸ they positively detested him. They were disgusted at his ill-timed drunkenness, his extravagant spending, his cavortings with women, his days spent in sleeping off his debauches or wandering about with an aching head and befuddled wits, and his nights spent in revels or watching lavish spectacles or attending the wedding feast of some actor or comedian. The story goes that he once attended a banquet given for the wedding of Hippias the actor, ate and drank all night, and then, when the people summoned him early the next morning to the forum, he appeared in public surfeited with food and vomited into his toga, which one of his friends held ready for him. Sergius, the mime, was one of his friends who had the greatest influence over him, and also Cytheris,⁵⁹ a woman from the same stable, to whom he was much attached. When he visited the cities of Italy she accompanied him in a litter, which was followed by a retinue of attendants as large as his own mother's.

Besides this, there was much else in Antony's way of living which caused great offence. People were scandalized, for example, at the sight of the golden drinking cups which were carried before him when he left the city, as if they were part of some religious procession; at the pavilions which were set up on his journeys; at the lavish meals which were spread in groves or on the banks of rivers; at his chariots drawn by lions and at his habit of billeting prostitutes and sambuca-players⁶⁰ in the homes of honest men and women. People thought it outrageous that while Caesar was sleeping under the open sky far away from Italy, and undergoing great hardships and dangers as he cleared up what was left of the war, his supporters should profit by his exertions to wallow in luxury and insult their fellow-citizens.

10. This kind of behaviour is also believed to have intensified the bitterness of the Civil War and to have encouraged the soldiers into hideous acts of violence and looting. So when Caesar returned to Rome he pardoned Dolabella, and when he was elected consul for the third time,⁶¹ he chose Lepidus rather than Antony as his colleague. At this moment also Pompey's house happened to be put up for sale and Antony bought it, but when he was asked to hand over the money for it he became angry.⁶² Antony himself makes out that the reason why he did not take part in Caesar's African campaign⁶³ was that he felt aggrieved at not having been rewarded in any way for his earlier successes.

Still, it appears that Caesar cured Antony of much of his folly and extravagance by not allowing his faults to pass unnoticed. At any rate, he now reformed his whole manner of living, turned his thoughts towards marriage and chose Fulvia,⁶⁴ the widow of Clodius the demagogue. She was a woman who took no interest in spinning or managing a household, nor could she be content to rule a husband who had no ambition for public life: her desire was to govern a governor and command a commander. So Cleopatra should really have paid tuition fees to Fulvia for Antony's submissiveness to women, for by the time she took him over he had already been quite broken in and schooled to accept the sway of women. However, Antony did his best by means of practical jokes and other boyish pranks to import a little gaiety into his relationship with Fulvia. For example, when Caesar returned after his victory in Spain, Antony, like many others among his supporters, went out to meet him. Suddenly the rumour began to spread that Caesar had been killed and that his enemies were about to invade Italy, whereupon Antony turned back to Rome. He disguised himself as a slave, made out that he was carrying a letter to Fulvia from Antony and was admitted to her presence with his face all muffled.⁶⁵ Fulvia was distracted and before taking the letter asked him

whether Antony was alive. He handed it to her in silence, and no sooner had she opened it and begun to read it than he flung his arms around her and kissed her. I mention this story as a single example of many such actions of his.

11. When Caesar returned from Spain,⁶⁶ everybody of importance in Rome travelled for several days to meet him, but it was Antony whom he singled out for especial honour. As he passed through Italy, it was Antony who shared Caesar's chariot. After them rode Brutus Albinus⁶⁷ and Octavian, the dictator's nephew⁶⁸ who afterwards took the name of Caesar and ruled Rome for many years. And when Caesar had been elected consul for the fifth time,⁶⁹ he immediately chose Antony for his colleague. He had intended to resign his own office and pass it over to Dolabella, and he announced this plan to the senate. But Antony violently opposed the scheme and poured abuse upon Dolabella, who returned it with interest, until Caesar became so ashamed of this wrangling among his supporters that for the time being he put the idea aside. Later, when Caesar appeared in public to nominate Dolabella as consul, Antony cried out that the omens were unfavourable, whereupon Caesar gave up the attempt and abandoned the indignant Dolabella.⁷⁰ In fact, it would appear that Caesar was as much disgusted with Dolabella as he was with Antony. The story goes that when someone was accusing them both of plotting against Caesar, he remarked: 'It is not these fat, long-haired types I am afraid of, but the pale, lean ones'⁷¹ – and here he pointed to Brutus and Cassius, the men who were to conspire against him and murder him.

12. It was Antony who quite unintentionally supplied the conspirators with their most plausible pretext. The occasion was the festival of the Lycaea, which the Romans call the Lupercalia,⁷² and Caesar, dressed in a triumphal robe⁷³ and seated upon the rostra in the forum, was watching the runners as they darted to and fro. This is a ceremony at which many of the young patricians and holders of the offices of state are anointed with oil, and, carrying leather thongs in their hands, they run about and strike in sport at everyone they meet. Antony was one of these runners, but instead of carrying out the traditional ceremony, he twined a wreath of laurel round a diadem⁷⁴ and ran with it to the rostra. There he was lifted up by his fellow-runners and placed the diadem on Caesar's head, implying by this gesture that he ought to be king. At this Caesar made a show of declining the crown, whereupon the people were delighted and clapped their hands. Again Antony pressed it upon him, and again Caesar waved it aside. The battle continued for some time, with a few of Antony's friends encouraging his attempts to force the crown upon Caesar, while the crowd greeted every refusal with shouts of applause. Yet perhaps the most curious

aspect of this affair was that while the people were ready to submit to the fact of being ruled by a king, they still shrank from the title, as though it signified the destruction of their liberty. At last, Caesar, who had been vexed by the whole episode, rose from the rostra, pulled open his toga, and called out that anyone who wished to cut his throat might do so there and then.⁷⁵ The wreath was placed upon one of his statues, whereupon some of the tribunes of the people tore it down. The people followed them home with loud applause and cries of approval, but on Caesar's orders they were deposed from their office.⁷⁶

13. This episode encouraged Brutus and Cassius,⁷⁷ and when they were enlisting in their plot the friends they could trust, they discussed the question of whether or not to approach Antony. The rest of the conspirators were in favour of including him, but Trebonius⁷⁸ opposed the idea. He mentioned that at the time when many people had left Rome to meet Caesar on his return from Spain, Antony had travelled with him and shared his tent, and Trebonius had then sounded him unobtrusively and cautiously. Antony had understood his drift, he maintained, but had given him no encouragement: at the same time he had not reported the conversation to Caesar, but had faithfully kept it secret.⁷⁹ It was then proposed that they should kill Antony as well as Caesar, but Brutus objected to this, arguing that if they were undertaking to kill a man for the sake of justice and the laws, then the deed must be kept pure and free from any taint of injustice.⁸⁰ But they were afraid of Antony's physical strength and the influence which he commanded through his office, and some of the conspirators were detailed to keep watch for him,⁸¹ so that when Caesar entered the senate-house and they were about to carry out the assassination, Antony should be engaged in conversation about some urgent matter and kept outside the chamber.

14. These plans were duly put into effect and Caesar fell in the senate-house.⁸² Antony immediately disguised himself as a slave and went into hiding. But when he learned that the conspirators had merely assembled on the Capitol and had no further designs against anyone, he persuaded them to come down into the city and sent them his son as a hostage.⁸³ He even went so far as to entertain Cassius in his house, and Lepidus did the same for Brutus. He also arranged a meeting of the senate, at which he moved that an amnesty should be declared and that provinces should be allotted to Brutus and Cassius and their supporters.⁸⁴ The senate passed this proposal, and also voted that no change should be made in the measures which Caesar had taken. Antony left the senate as the most glorious man alive: it was felt that he had delivered Rome from civil war and had succeeded in resolving an exceptionally difficult and confused situation in a most

prudent and statesmanlike fashion.

However, these counsels of moderation were soon swept away by the tide of popular feeling which was now running in Antony's favour, and which inspired him with the hope that if Brutus could be overthrown, he himself would be sure to become the first man in Rome. It so happened that when Caesar's body was carried out for burial, Antony delivered the customary eulogy over it in the forum.⁸⁵ When he saw that his oratory had cast a spell over the people and that they were deeply stirred by his words, he began to introduce into his praises a note of pity and of indignation at Caesar's fate. Finally, at the close of his speech, he snatched up the dead man's robes and brandished them aloft, all bloodstained as they were and stabbed through in many places, and denounced the men who had done this as polluted murderers. This appeal made the people so passionate with rage that they piled up benches and tables and burned Caesar's body in the forum,⁸⁶ and then, snatching up firebrands from the pyre, they ran to the houses of his assassins and attacked them.

15. Because of these events Brutus and his followers left the city,⁸⁷ while Caesar's friends allied themselves with Antony. Meanwhile, Caesar's widow, Calpurnia, entrusted Antony with the greater part of Caesar's treasure, which she removed from her house and delivered into his hands. This amounted in all to 4,000 talents.⁸⁸ Antony also took charge of Caesar's papers, which contained written memoranda of many of his plans and decrees.⁸⁹ He made a number of insertions into these documents and so appointed many magistrates and senators according to his own wishes, and he also recalled some men from exile and released others from prison, all the time pretending that these actions represented the will of Caesar.⁹⁰ The Romans by way of mockery nicknamed all those who had benefited in this way 'the Charonites',⁹¹ because if they were called upon to substantiate their case, they appealed to the records of the dead. In short, Antony at this period handled everything in an autocratic fashion, since he himself held the consulship, while his brothers had also been appointed to high office, Gaius as praetor and Lucius as tribune.⁹²

16. This was the situation in Rome which the young Octavian⁹³ found when he arrived. He was, as I have mentioned above,⁹⁴ a son of Caesar's niece, who had been left the heir to the dead man's property,⁹⁵ and at the time of the assassination he had been living at Apollonia.⁹⁶ He at once paid his respects to Antony as the friend of his family, and then reminded him of the money which had been placed in his charge, since according to the terms of Caesar's will Octavian was bound as the legal heir to pay every Roman citizen the sum of 75 drachmas.⁹⁷ Antony was at first inclined to despise Octavian as a mere

boy, and told him that he must be out of his mind: lacking judgement and lacking friends, he was taking on himself a burden too heavy to bear, the succession to Caesar. Octavian was quite unmoved by this argument and continued to demand the money, while Antony for his part did everything possible to humiliate him. First of all he opposed him when Octavian stood for election as tribune,⁹⁸ and then when the young man attempted to dedicate a golden chair in honour of Caesar, as the senate had decreed,⁹⁹ Antony threatened to have him imprisoned, unless he stopped trying to ingratiate himself with the people. Octavian's next move was to join forces with Cicero and all the rest of Antony's bitterest enemies: with their help the support of the senate was secured, while he himself won the goodwill of the people and also succeeded in mobilizing many of Caesar's veterans from their colonies. By now Antony was becoming alarmed at these manoeuvres, and he met Octavian for a conference on the Capitol at which the two men were reconciled.¹⁰⁰ On the same night after their meeting Antony experienced a strange dream, in which it seemed to him that his right hand was struck by a thunderbolt. A few days later a report reached him that Octavian was plotting against his life.¹⁰¹ Octavian did his utmost to justify himself, but he could not succeed in removing Antony's suspicions, and so the hostility between the two men flared up as intensely as ever. Both of them hurried all over Italy and vied with one another in offering lavish pay and rewards to recruit the veterans¹⁰² (who by now had settled on the land), and in being the first to secure the allegiance of the legionaries who were still under arms.

17. At this time Cicero commanded more influence than any other man in Rome. He was now trying to inflame everyone against Antony¹⁰³ and he succeeded so far as to persuade the senate to declare him a public enemy,¹⁰⁴ to confer the fasces and other insignia of a praetor upon Octavian and to dispatch Hirtius and Pansa,¹⁰⁵ the consuls, to drive Antony out of Italy. The two armies met near Mutina,¹⁰⁶ and Octavian was present and fought on the side of the consuls. Antony was defeated, but Hirtius and Pansa were both killed.

Antony's army experienced terrible hardships in their retreat,¹⁰⁷ and they suffered most of all from hunger. But it was characteristic of Antony to show his finest qualities in the hour of trial, and indeed it was always when his fortunes were at their lowest that he came nearest to being a good man. It is a common experience for men who are brought down by some overpowering catastrophe to understand what virtue is, but it is rare for people to find the strength to emulate the qualities they admire and to rid themselves of the vices they condemn: on the contrary, many people become so discouraged by

adversity that they give way to their accustomed habits all the more and allow their judgement to collapse. At any rate, on this occasion Antony set a wonderful example to his soldiers. In spite of all the luxury and extravagance of his recent life, he could bring himself without difficulty to drink foul water and eat wild fruits and roots. And during the crossing of the Alps,¹⁰⁸ we are told, the army was reduced even to devouring the bark of trees and creatures that no man had ever tasted before.

18. He was making for the armies on the other side of the Alps, for these were commanded by Lepidus:¹⁰⁹ he was believed to be friendly to Antony, and had benefited greatly from his association with Caesar through Antony's help. But when Antony arrived and encamped close by, there was no sign whatever of a welcome, and so he decided to risk everything on a bold move. His hair was long and uncombed, his beard had been left to grow long after his defeat,¹¹⁰ and he now put on a dark cloak, walked up to the palisade which surrounded Lepidus's camp and began to speak to the soldiers. Many of them were immediately touched by his appearance and stirred by his words, whereupon Lepidus became alarmed and ordered all the trumpets to be sounded so as to drown Antony's voice. But this only increased the soldiers' pity for him, and they then disguised Laelius and Clodius in the dresses of two of the prostitutes who followed the army and sent them to confer with Antony in secret. These two urged him to approach their camp at once, for there was nothing to fear: there were many who would not only welcome him but would kill Lepidus if he wished. Antony would not allow them to touch Lepidus, but the next day he began to cross the river with his army. He himself was the first to set foot in the water and waded over to the opposite shore, where he could already see many of Lepidus's troops stretching out their hands to welcome him and pulling down the fortifications of their camp. After he had entered and made himself master of the camp, he treated Lepidus with the greatest kindness. He embraced him, addressed him by the title of father and, although he was in complete control of his rival's army, he insisted that Lepidus should retain the rank and honours of a general. His behaviour persuaded Munatius Plancus,¹¹¹ who was encamped close by with another large body of troops, to join forces with him, and so with his army now restored to a formidable strength, he recrossed the Alps and marched into Italy with seventeen legions of infantry and ten thousand cavalry at his back. In addition to these he left six legions to garrison Gaul: this force was under the command of a certain Varius, one of his drinking friends, who was nicknamed 'Half-pint'.¹¹²

19. Meanwhile, Octavian was no longer paying any attention to

Cicero, who, he realized, was attached to liberty;¹¹³ and he now sent his friends to Antony and invited him to come to terms. So the three¹¹⁴ met on a small island in the middle of a river, and here their conference lasted for three days. They found no difficulty in agreeing on a great range of subjects, and they divided the rule of the whole world between them just as if it had been a family inheritance. The most troublesome of their problems turned out to be the question of which men were to be put to death, since each of them demanded the right to rid himself of his respective enemies and spare his own flesh and blood. In the end the hatred which each of them felt towards their enemies overcame their sense of honour towards their kinsmen and their loyalty towards their friends, so that Octavian sacrificed Cicero to Antony,¹¹⁵ while Antony in return gave up Lucius Caesar, who was his uncle on his mother's side.¹¹⁶ Lepidus was given the privilege of having his own brother Paullus¹¹⁷ executed, although some say that he gave up Paullus to Antony and Octavian who had demanded his death.¹¹⁸ I can conceive of nothing more savage or vindictive than this trafficking in blood. At the end of all this bartering of one death for another, they were just as guilty of the murder of the men whom they abandoned as of those whom they seized; but the wrong which they did to their friends was the more unforgivable of the two, since they killed them without even hating them.

20. To complete this reconciliation the soldiers crowded round the three leaders and demanded that Octavian should cement the alliance by marrying Clodia, the daughter of Antony's wife Fulvia.¹¹⁹ This was likewise agreed, after which the triumvirs proceeded to proscribe and put to death three hundred men:¹²⁰ these included Cicero, and after he had been slaughtered¹²¹ Antony gave orders that his head and his right hand, with which Cicero had penned his invectives against him, should be cut off. When these were brought to him, he gazed at them in triumph and burst into peals of delighted laughter. Then, after he had taken his fill, he had them nailed up above the rostra in the forum, as if he had succeeded in inflicting a humiliation on the dead man, and not merely made a spectacle of the abuse of his power and of his own arrogance in the hour of good fortune. His uncle, Lucius Caesar, who had also been proscribed, found himself hunted down by his persecutors and took refuge with his sister.¹²² When the murderers broke into her house and tried to force their way into her room, she stood in front of the door barring their entrance, and stretching out her hands, cried aloud, 'You shall not kill Lucius Caesar unless you kill me first – me, your commander's mother.' By acting like that she succeeded in getting her brother Lucius out of the way and saved his life.

21. Indeed, the triumvirate was generally detested at Rome. It was Antony who earned the greatest share of the blame,¹²³ for he was older than Octavian and more influential than Lepidus, and as soon as he had shaken off his immediate troubles he plunged once more into his old life of pleasure and debauchery.¹²⁴ His general reputation was bad enough, but he aroused still more hatred on account of the house in which he lived. It had previously belonged to Pompey the Great,¹²⁵ a man who was admired no less for his sobriety and his modest, orderly and democratic way of life than for the fact of his having earned three triumphs.¹²⁶ People were indignant when they saw that this house was most often barred to generals, magistrates and ambassadors, who found themselves insolently turned away from the doors, and filled with actors, conjurors and drunken parasites, upon whom Antony squandered most of the money which he had wrung with such violence and cruelty from his victims.¹²⁷ For the triumvirs were not content with selling the properties of the men they proscribed, laying further false accusations against their wives and relatives, and imposing extortionate taxes of every kind; when they learned that various sums had been deposited with the Vestal Virgins both by foreigners and by Roman citizens, they went and seized the money by force. Antony's appetite was insatiable, and Octavian eventually demanded that the money they confiscated should be shared between them. They also shared the command of the army and led their combined forces into Macedonia to attack Brutus and Cassius,¹²⁸ leaving Lepidus in charge of Rome.

22. However, when they crossed the Adriatic, launched their campaign and encamped near the enemy with Antony facing Cassius's troops and Octavian those of Brutus, Octavian achieved nothing worth mentioning; it was Antony who seized the initiative and triumphed in every engagement.¹²⁹ At any rate, in the first battle Octavian suffered a crushing defeat from Brutus, his camp was taken and he barely managed to escape, although he makes out in his *Memoirs* that he withdrew before the battle because of a dream which one of his friends experienced.¹³⁰ Antony, on the other hand, overcame Cassius's army – though some writers have said that Antony was not present at the battle, but only joined in when his men were already in pursuit of the enemy.¹³¹ Cassius knew nothing of Brutus's success and was killed at his own command by Pindarus, one of his trusted freedmen.¹³² A second battle was fought a few days later, and in this Brutus was defeated and took his own life.¹³³ Antony earned most of the credit for the victory, since on this occasion Octavian was ill. As he stood over Brutus's body, Antony uttered a few words of reproach for the fate of his brother Gaius, whom Brutus had put to death in Macedonia in

revenge for the murder of Cicero.¹³⁴ But he declared that he blamed Hortensius for this more than Brutus, and gave orders for him to be executed over his brother's tomb. Then he threw his own scarlet cloak, which was of great value, over Brutus's body and commanded one of his freedmen to make himself responsible for its burial. When he discovered later that this man had never burned the cloak with Brutus's body and had stolen a great deal of the money assigned for the funeral, he had him put to death.

23. After this, Octavian was carried back to Rome, and it was generally believed that his sickness would prove fatal. Antony now marched across Greece with a large army to levy money from all the eastern provinces. The triumvirs had promised each of their soldiers a bounty of 5,000 drachmas,¹³⁵ and so they now found themselves obliged to adopt a harsher policy both in imposing taxes and in collecting tribute. In his dealings with the Greeks, Antony's behaviour was moderate and courteous enough, at least in the beginning, and for his entertainment he was content to listen to the discussions of scholars and attend games and initiation ceremonies. He was fair in his administration of justice, and took pleasure in being addressed as a lover of Greece, and still more as a lover of Athens: he showered gifts upon that city. But when the people of Megara wanted to show him something to rival the beauty of Athens and invited him to see their senate-house, he duly went up and looked it over. Then they asked him what he thought of it. 'It's small,' he said, 'and it's falling down.' He also had the Temple of Pythian Apollo surveyed so as to complete it: he indeed gave a promise to this effect to the senate.¹³⁶

24. But when he left Lucius Censorinus¹³⁷ in charge of Greece, crossed into Asia and laid his hands on the wealth of the province, everything changed. Kings would flock to his door, while their wives would vie with one another in offering gifts and exploiting their beauty, and would give themselves up to his pleasure.¹³⁸ So while Octavian in Rome was wearing himself out in the never-ending struggle of party politics and civil war, Antony was revelling in the delights of peace and infinite leisure, and soon allowed his passions to sweep him back into his accustomed mode of life. Lute-players like Anaxenor,¹³⁹ flute-players like Xanthus, a certain dancer called Metrodorus and a whole pack of Asiatic performers, who far surpassed in forwardness and buffoonery even the pests who had come out with him from Italy, now descended upon him and took control of his court. It was intolerable. Everything that came in was spent on extravagances like these. For the whole province of Asia, like Sophocles' Thebes, was laden with incense, 'laden with paeans and moans of despair'.¹⁴⁰ Certainly, when Antony made his entry into Ephesus, women dressed as Bacchantes and

men and boys as satyrs and Pans marched in procession before him. The city was filled with wreaths of ivy and thyrsus wands, the air resounded with the music of harps, pipes and oboes, and the people hailed him as Dionysus the Benefactor and the Bringer of Joy.¹⁴¹ Certainly this was how some people saw him, but to the majority he came as Dionysus of Savagery and Wildness,¹⁴² for he stripped many noble families of their property and gave it away to rogues and flatterers. In other cases men were allowed to steal fortunes from owners who were still living by making them out to be dead. Antony even gave the house of a man of Magnesia to a cook, whose reputation, we are told, had been earned on the strength of a single dinner. But at last when Antony imposed a second levy on the cities, Hybreas,¹⁴³ speaking on behalf of the whole province of Asia, summoned up the courage to say this: 'If you can take tribute from us twice a year, no doubt you can give us two summers and two harvests.' He expressed himself with a certain rhetorical flourish which appealed to Antony's taste, and then he summed up his case effectively and boldly: Asia had already raised 200,000 talents for Antony, he said; 'if you have never received this money, you should ask for it from the men who collected it. But if you did receive it and no longer have it, then we are ruined.'

These words made a deep impression upon Antony, for he was completely ignorant of much that was done in his name, not so much because he was lazy as because he was simple enough to trust his subordinates. His character was, in fact, essentially simple and he was slow to perceive the truth. Once he recognized that he was at fault, he was full of repentance and ready to admit his errors to those he had wronged. Whenever he had to punish an offence or right an injustice, he acted on the grand scale, and it was generally considered that he overstepped the bounds far more often in the rewards he bestowed than in the punishments he inflicted. As for the kind of coarse and insolent banter which he liked to exchange, this carried its own remedy with it, for anyone could return his ribaldry with interest, and he enjoyed being laughed at quite as much as laughing at others. And in fact it was this quality that often did him harm, for he found it impossible to believe that the real purpose of those who took liberties and cracked jokes with him was to flatter him. He never understood that some men go out of their way to adopt a frank and outspoken manner and use it like a piquant sauce to disguise the cloying taste of flattery. Such people deliberately indulged in bold repartee and an aggressive flow of talk when they were in their cups, so that the obsequious compliance which they showed in matters of business did not seem the mark of people who were simply trying to please, but of those who genuinely accepted his superior wisdom.¹⁴⁴

25. Such being Antony's nature, the love for Cleopatra¹⁴⁵ which now entered his life came as the final and crowning mischief which could befall him. It excited to the point of frenzy¹⁴⁶ many passions that had hitherto lain concealed or at least dormant, and it stifled or corrupted all those redeeming qualities in him which were still capable of resisting temptation. This is how he was captured. While he was preparing for the campaign against the Parthians,¹⁴⁷ he sent word to Cleopatra, ordering her to meet him in Cilicia to answer the charge that she had raised money for Cassius and sent him help in the war.¹⁴⁸ Dellius¹⁴⁹ was sent to carry out this mission. As soon as he saw her beauty and realized the charm and subtlety of Cleopatra's conversation, he knew at once that such a woman, so far from having anything to fear from Antony, would probably gain the strongest influence over him. So he decided to pay his court to the Egyptian queen and urged her (in Homer's words) 'to come to Cilicia, decked in all her splendour',¹⁵⁰ and to have no fear of Antony, who was the most delightful and kindest of generals. Cleopatra was impressed by what Dellius told her. She had already seen for herself the power of her beauty to enchant Julius Caesar and Gnaeus, the son of Pompey,¹⁵¹ and she expected to conquer Antony even more easily. For Caesar and Gnaeus Pompey had known her when she was still a young girl with no experience of the world, but she was to meet Antony at the age when a woman's beauty is at its most superb and her mind at its most mature.¹⁵² She therefore provided herself with as lavish a supply of gifts, money and ornaments as one would expect from so powerful a queen and so prosperous a realm. But, as she arrived, she relied above all upon herself, her magical arts and her charms.

26. She received a whole succession of letters from Antony and his friends summoning her to visit him, but she treated him with such disdain that when she appeared it was as if in mockery of his orders. She came sailing up the River Cydnus in a barge with a poop of gold, its purple sails billowing in the wind; the oars were silver, and the rowers kept time to the music of flute, pipe and lyre. Cleopatra herself reclined beneath a canopy of cloth of gold, dressed in the character of Aphrodite, as we see her in paintings, while on either side to complete the picture stood boys costumed as Cupids, who cooled her with their fans.¹⁵³ Instead of a crew, the barge was lined with the most beautiful of her waiting-women attired as Nereids and Graces, some at the rudders, others at the tackle of the sails, and all the while an indescribably rich perfume, exhaled from innumerable censers, was wafted from the vessel to the river-banks. Great multitudes accompanied this royal progress, some of them escorting the queen on both sides all the way from the river, while others hurried down from

the city to gaze at the sight. Gradually the crowds drifted away from the market-place until eventually Antony was left sitting quite alone on his tribunal, and the word spread on every side that Aphrodite was coming to revel with Dionysus for the happiness of Asia.

Antony then sent a message inviting Cleopatra to dine with him, but she thought it more appropriate that he should come to her. He wished to begin by showing his courtesy and goodwill, and so he accepted and went. He found the preparations made to receive him magnificent beyond words, but what astonished him most of all was the extraordinary number of lights.¹⁵⁴ So many of these, it is said, were let down from the roof and displayed on all sides at once, and they were arranged and grouped in such ingenious patterns in relation to each other, some in squares and some in circles, that they created a spectacle almost unparalleled in its brilliance and beauty.

27. On the following day Antony returned her hospitality with another banquet, but although he had hoped to surpass her in splendour and lavishness he was hopelessly outdone in both; and he was the first to make fun of the squalid and crude quality of his entertainment. Cleopatra saw that Antony's humour was broad and gross and belonged to the soldier rather than the courtier, and she quickly adopted the same manner towards him and treated him without the least reserve.

Her own beauty, so we are told, was not of that incomparable kind which instantly captivates the beholder.¹⁵⁵ But the charm of her presence was irresistible and there was an attraction in her person and her talk, together with a peculiar force of character which pervaded her every word and action, and laid all who associated with her under its spell. It was a delight merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which, like an instrument of many strings, she could pass from one language to another, so that in her interviews with barbarians she seldom required an interpreter, but conversed with them quite unaided, whether they were Ethiopians, Trogodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. In fact, she is said to have become familiar with the speech of many other peoples besides, although the rulers of Egypt before her had never even troubled to learn the Egyptian language, and some of them had even given up their native Macedonian dialect.¹⁵⁶

28. Antony was ravished. It was a crucial moment: in Rome Fulvia his wife was carrying on open war against Octavian in defence of her husband's interests,¹⁵⁷ and a Parthian army under Labienus¹⁵⁸ (the king's generals had given him the title of 'Parthian commander'¹⁵⁹ to lead this force) was hovering threateningly on the frontier of Mesopotamia and was about to invade Syria. Yet Antony allowed the

queen to carry him off to Alexandria,¹⁶⁰ and there he threw himself into the diversions and amusements of a young lad of leisure. But, as he took his pleasures, he was spending and squandering what Antiphon¹⁶¹ calls ‘the most precious outlay of all’ – Time itself. Antony and Cleopatra gathered around them a company of friends whom they called the Inimitable Livers,¹⁶² and each day they gave banquets for one another of an almost incredible extravagance. Philotas, a physician who lived at Amphissa, used to tell my grandfather Lamprias¹⁶³ that he was studying his profession in Alexandria at this time, and that, having made the acquaintance of one of the royal cooks, he was persuaded, as was natural enough in a young man, to come and see the lavish preparations which were made for a royal dinner. He was introduced into the kitchens of the palace, and, after he had seen the enormous abundance of provisions and watched eight wild boars being roasted, he expressed his astonishment at the size of the company for which this vast hospitality was intended. The cook laughed aloud and explained that this was not a large party, only about a dozen people, but that everything must be cooked and served to perfection, and that the whole effect could be ruined by a moment’s delay. ‘Antony might call for the meal right now, or in a few minutes’ time; or he might delay it for a while, if he calls for a cup of wine or an interesting conversation springs up. So not one, but many dinners have been ordered, as it’s so hard to guess the time right.’

That was one of Philotas’s stories, and here is another. As time went on he became one of the doctors treating Antony’s eldest son by Fulvia.¹⁶⁴ Whenever the young man was not dining with his father, he would often dine with some friends, including Philotas. On one occasion there was a physician present, who had been talking boastfully and had annoyed the company at supper, until Philotas managed to silence him with the following piece of sophistry: ‘In some states of fever the patient should take cold water. Everyone in a fever is in some state of fever: therefore everyone in a fever should take cold water.’ The man was nonplussed by this argument and could say nothing in reply. Antony’s son was delighted and said with a laugh, ‘All this is yours, Philotas,’ and pointed to a table which was laden with large drinking cups. Philotas appreciated his host’s desire to show his gratitude, but it never crossed his mind that so young a boy could possibly have the authority to give away a present of this size. Then, not long afterwards, one of the slaves brought the cups to him in a sack and asked him to put his seal on it. When Philotas waved them aside and was afraid to accept the present, the man said, ‘Don’t be a fool! Why do you hesitate? Don’t you know that this is Antony’s son, who has the right to give you so many gifts of gold if he wants to? But if I were you, I should exchange the whole lot with us for cash.

Some of these cups are old, and the workmanship is considered very valuable, and it is quite possible the boy's father might miss them.'

Those are the stories which, according to my grandfather, Philotas was always telling.

29. Plato speaks of four kinds of flattery,¹⁶⁵ but Cleopatra knew many more. Whether Antony's mood was serious or gay, she could always invent some fresh device to delight or charm him. She was training him as her pupil,¹⁶⁶ never releasing him for an instant by day or by night. She played dice with him, drank with him and hunted with him, and when he exercised with his weapons she watched him. At night, when he liked to wander about the city, stand by the doors or windows of ordinary citizens' houses and make fun of the people inside, she would dress up as a maidservant and play her part in any mad prank that came into Antony's head, for it was his custom to go out disguised as a slave. On these occasions he was always received with torrents of abuse and sometimes even found himself beaten up before he returned to the palace, although most people guessed who he was. The fact was that the Alexandrians had a weakness for his buffoonery and enjoyed playing their part in these amusements with good timing and good taste. They liked him personally, and used to say that Antony put on his tragic mask for the Romans, but kept the comic one for them.

Now it would be a great waste of time for me to describe all the details of Antony's childish amusements, but a single instance may serve as an illustration. One day he went out fishing, had no luck with his line and was all the more enraged because Cleopatra happened to be present. So he ordered some fishermen to dive down and secretly to fasten on to his hook a number of fish they had already caught, and he proceeded to pull up his line two or three times. But the queen noticed. She pretended to admire his success, but then told her friends what had happened and invited them to come and watch on the next day. A large party got into the fishing boats, and when Antony had let down his line, Cleopatra ordered one of her own servants to swim immediately to his hook and fix on to it a salted fish from the Black Sea. Antony, believing that he had made a catch, pulled up his line, whereupon the whole company burst out laughing, as was natural, and Cleopatra told him: 'General, you had better give up your rod to us poor rulers of Pharos and Canopus. Your prey is cities and kingdoms and continents.'

30. Antony was behaving in this silly, adolescent way when he was surprised by two reports. The first was from Rome to the effect that his brother Lucius and Fulvia had first quarrelled with one another, then joined forces to make war against Octavian, but had lost

completely and been forced to flee from Italy.¹⁶⁷ The second, which was no less disturbing, announced that Labienus in command of a Parthian army was making himself master of Asia, from the Euphrates and Syria as far west as the provinces of Lydia and Ionia.¹⁶⁸ Then at last, like a man who has been roughly awoken after sleeping off a heavy debauch, Antony took the field against the Parthians and advanced as far as Phoenicia.¹⁶⁹ There, however, he received a letter from Fulvia full of lamentations at her plight and so he decided to change his plans and sail for Italy with his fleet of two hundred ships. On his way he picked up a number of his supporters who were in flight from Italy, and from them he learned that it was Fulvia who had been the principal cause of the war with Octavian. She was a headstrong woman who enjoyed meddling in politics, and she had hoped that the quickest way to make Antony leave Cleopatra would be to stir up hostilities in Italy.¹⁷⁰ But it so happened that Fulvia, as she was on her way to meet Antony, fell ill and died at Sicyon. This event greatly improved the prospects of reconciliation with Octavian, for when Antony arrived in Italy it soon became clear that Octavian had no intention of holding him responsible for the war and was blaming Fulvia for everything that Antony was holding against him. When they met, their friends on both sides would not let Antony probe these excuses too closely. Their first concern was to reconcile the two men personally, and then to divide up the empire. They made the Ionian Sea the boundary between them and gave the eastern territories to Antony and the western to Octavian, while Lepidus was allowed the province of Africa. It was also arranged that, when they were not to be consuls themselves, the two men's supporters should hold this office in turn.¹⁷¹

31. These arrangements were generally considered reasonable, but it was felt that a closer tie would also be desirable, and for this fortune now provided the opportunity. Octavian had a half-sister, Octavia, who was older than himself¹⁷² and was the daughter of Anchoria, while he was the child by a later marriage of Atia.¹⁷³ Octavian was deeply attached to his sister who was, they say, a wonder of a woman. Her husband, Gaius Marcellus, had died only a short while before and she was now a widow, while Antony, since Fulvia's death, was also regarded as a widower. He did not deny his connection with Cleopatra, but he did not admit that she was his wife, and in this question of description at least he was still fighting against his love for the Egyptian queen. Everyone was urging that this marriage should take place, for it was hoped that if only Octavia – who in addition to her beauty¹⁷⁴ possessed great dignity of character and good sense – could become united to Antony and win his love, as such a woman

could hardly fail to do, this alliance would prove the salvation of their own affairs and would restore harmony to the Roman world. Accordingly, when the two men had agreed upon terms, they went to Rome and celebrated Octavia's wedding. The law did not allow a woman to marry until ten months had elapsed after her husband's death,¹⁷⁵ but in this instance the senate passed a decree to dispense with the usual time limit.

32. At this time Sextus Pompey's forces were still in control of Sicily.¹⁷⁶ He was also ravaging the Italian coast, and with the help of a pirate fleet under the command of Menas and Menecrates¹⁷⁷ was able to make it impossible for any other vessel to sail the sea. Nevertheless, he had given help to Antony's mother when she had fled from Rome with Fulvia¹⁷⁸ and was believed to be well disposed towards Antony himself, and so Antony and Octavian decided to come to terms with him as well. They met at the promontory of Misenum by the mole which runs into the sea.¹⁷⁹ Pompey's fleet was anchored close by, and Antony's and Octavian's troops were drawn up on the shore. There it was agreed that Pompey should hold Sardinia and Sicily, in return for which he undertook to keep the sea clear of pirates and send a specified quantity of grain to Rome; then, after they had reached agreement, they invited one another to dine. They cast lots to decide who should be host, and it fell to Pompey to entertain the company first. When Antony inquired where the banquet would be held, Pompey replied, 'There,' and pointed to his flagship with its six banks of oars; 'it is the only ancestral home that is left me.'¹⁸⁰ This retort was by way of reproach to Antony, who had taken possession of the house that had belonged to his father Pompey the Great. So Pompey anchored his ship close inshore, constructed a pontoon between it and the headland and warmly welcomed his guests on board. But later, when the company had become thoroughly convivial, and jokes concerning Antony's passion for Cleopatra were being bandied freely about, Menas the pirate came up to Pompey and whispered to him out of the guests' hearing, 'Shall I cut the cables and make you master not just of Sicily and Sardinia but of the whole Roman empire?' Pompey thought over this remark for a moment, and then burst out, 'Menas, you should have acted, not spoken to me about this beforehand. Now we must be content with things as they are. I do not break my word.' After this Pompey was entertained in his turn by Antony and by Octavian, and later he sailed back to Sicily.

33. After this treaty had been concluded, Antony sent Ventidius ahead of him into Asia to check the Parthian advance.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile, to please Octavian, he accepted appointment as priest of Julius Caesar,¹⁸² and during this period he and Octavian consulted one another and

acted in harmony in their handling of the great affairs of state. Nevertheless, Antony was vexed by the fact that in their various diversions and amusements he always found himself worsted by Octavian.¹⁸³ He kept in his house an Egyptian soothsayer who was skilled in casting horoscopes, and this man, either to oblige Cleopatra or because he wished to tell Antony the truth, made no secret of his conviction that Antony's fortune, although great and brilliant by any other standard, was constantly eclipsed by that of Octavian; and so he advised Antony to keep as far away from his young colleague as he could. 'Your guardian spirit', he warned Antony, 'stands in awe of his, and although by itself it is proud and full of mettle, it becomes cowed and ignoble when his draws near.' And indeed the turn of events seemed to bear out the Egyptian's words, for we are told that whenever the two men cast lots in fun for any reason, or whenever they played at dice, it was always Antony who came out the loser. They often pitted cockerels or fighting quail against one another, and Octavian's always won. Antony contrived to hide his annoyance at such incidents, but they made him pay more attention to the Egyptian's warnings, and, after placing the management of his household in Octavian's hands, he left Italy. Octavia accompanied him as far as Greece (by now they had a daughter¹⁸⁴). He spent the winter in Athens and it was there that the news reached him of the first successes of Ventidius, who had defeated the Parthians in a pitched battle and killed not only Labienus, but also Phranipates, who was king Orodes' ablest general.¹⁸⁵ In honour of this victory, Antony gave a feast for the Greeks and took the office of gymnasiarch¹⁸⁶ at Athens. He left at home his insignia of rank as a Roman general, and appeared in public with his gymnasiarch's rods, wearing a tunic and the special white shoes, and wrestled with the young men, grabbing them by the waist and twisting their necks.

34. When the time came for him to set out for the Parthian campaign,¹⁸⁷ he took a wreath from the sacred olive tree of Athena, and in obedience to an oracle had a vessel filled with water from the sacred spring of the Clepsydra,¹⁸⁸ and took it with him. Meanwhile Pacorus, king Orodes' son, had again invaded Syria with a large army of Parthians, but he was engaged and defeated by Ventidius in the region of Cyrrhestica,¹⁸⁹ and the greater part of his force was annihilated, Pacorus himself being one of the first to be killed. This epic victory brought the Romans full revenge for the disaster that they had suffered under Crassus,¹⁹⁰ and the Parthians, who had now been decisively defeated in three successive battles, were driven back within Media and Mesopotamia. Ventidius decided not to pursue them any farther, however, for fear of arousing Antony's jealousy at his

success. Instead, he attacked and subdued the tribes which had revolted against Rome, and laid siege to Antiochus of Commagene¹⁹¹ in the city of Samosata. When Antiochus offered to pay 1,000 talents and make his submission to Antony, Ventidius told him that he must send his offer to Antony himself, who had advanced into the neighbourhood and had refused to allow Ventidius to conclude a settlement directly with Antiochus. He was anxious that at least one achievement should be credited to his own name and did not wish every success to be attributed to Ventidius. However, the siege dragged on and the townspeople, when they found that they had no hope of obtaining terms, defended themselves stoutly. Antony could achieve nothing, and as he had now begun to feel ashamed and repentant at having refused the original offer, he was content to make peace with Antiochus and accept a payment of 300 talents. He went on to settle some minor affairs in Syria, and then returned to Athens, and at the same time conferred appropriate honours on Ventidius and sent him home to celebrate his triumph.¹⁹²

Ventidius is the only man up to the present time who has ever celebrated a triumph over the Parthians.¹⁹³ His origins were humble, but his friendship with Antony gave him the opportunities to achieve great things, and he made such effective use of these that he confirmed the general verdict which has been passed on both Antony and Octavian, namely that their victories were more often won by their subordinates than by themselves. Certainly Sosius, another of Antony's commanders, won important victories in Syria, while Canidius not only conquered the Armenians when Antony left him in their territory, but also subdued the kings of the Iberi and the Albani and advanced as far as the Caucasus.¹⁹⁴ All this increased the fame and the glory of Antony's power among the barbarian peoples.

35. Meanwhile, Antony had again been angered by various slanders which Octavian had been spreading against him, and he sailed with three hundred ships for Italy. The people of Brundisium closed their harbour against him, and he therefore sailed round the coast to Tarentum.¹⁹⁵ There he was prevailed upon by Octavia, who had accompanied him from Greece, to allow her to visit her brother. She had already borne Antony two daughters and was now again pregnant.¹⁹⁶ She met Octavian on his journey, and asked his two friends Agrippa and Maecenas¹⁹⁷ to join her as she talked to him. Then she appealed to her brother with tears and passionate entreaties not to make her the most wretched of women when once she had been the happiest. As it was, she told him, the eyes of the whole world were upon her, since she was the wife of one of its masters and the sister of the other. 'If the worst should happen,' she said, 'and war break out

between you, no one can say which of you is fated to conquer the other, but what is quite certain is that my fate will be miserable.’

Her words touched Octavian and he came to Tarentum in a mood to make peace. There the inhabitants witnessed a truly noble spectacle, a great army peaceably encamped on land, a great fleet lying quietly offshore and the warm greetings of the men themselves and their friends as they met. Antony was the first to host a dinner, for this too was a courtesy that Octavian had conceded to his sister. They arrived at an agreement whereby Octavian was to transfer two legions to Antony for his Parthian campaign, and Antony in return a hundred galleys armed with bronze rams. Besides these concessions Octavia persuaded her husband to make over twenty light vessels to her brother, and her brother a thousand infantrymen to her husband.¹⁹⁸ In this way they parted friends, with Octavian immediately launching his campaign against Sextus Pompey and attacking Sicily,¹⁹⁹ and Antony crossing to Asia.²⁰⁰ He left Octavia, along with their children and his own by Fulvia, in Octavian’s safekeeping.

36. But now his great calamity, that is his passion for Cleopatra, which for a long while had lain dormant in his heart, and which appeared to have been charmed away or at least lulled into oblivion by wiser counsels, suddenly gathered strength and blazed once more into life as he approached the coast of Syria. And finally, just like the rebellious and unmanageable horse which Plato describes²⁰¹ when he compares the human soul to a chariot team, so Antony kicked away all those nobler considerations of restraint which might have saved him, and sent Fonteius Capito²⁰² to escort Cleopatra to Syria. And when she arrived, the presents he showered upon her were no mere trinkets. To the dominions she already possessed he added Phoenicia, Coele Syria, Cyprus and a large part of Cilicia.²⁰³ He also gave her the region of Judaea which produces balsam²⁰⁴ and the coastal strip of Arabia Nabataea, which stretches down to the Red Sea. The gift of these territories aroused particularly deep resentment among the Romans. Yet Antony was generous to many others as well, bestowing tetrarchies and even the sovereignty of great peoples upon private individuals; he also deprived many rulers of their kingdoms, as for example Antigonus of Judaea, whom he had publicly beheaded,²⁰⁵ although no king before him had ever been punished by the Romans in this way. But the most paining aspect of these honours conferred upon Cleopatra was the shame of it all. He went on to make the scandal worse by acknowledging his twin children by her, one of whom he named Alexander and the other Cleopatra, and surnamed them the Sun and the Moon.²⁰⁶ Still, Antony was well versed in the art of putting the best possible face on disreputable actions, and he used

to declare that the greatness of the Roman empire was manifested in its power to bestow kingdoms rather than to take them, and that a noble line should be extended by leaving a succession born of many sovereigns. At any rate it was on this principle, he said, that his own ancestor had been begotten by Hercules, who did not limit his posterity to any single womb, nor allow himself to be overawed by any Solonian laws²⁰⁷ to regulate conception. He never feared the audit of his copulations, but let nature have her way, and left behind him the foundations of many races.

37. It was around now that Phraates put his father Orodes to death and seized possession of the kingdom of Parthia.²⁰⁸ Many of the Parthians fled the country, and one of them named Monaeses, a man of high rank and considerable power, took refuge with Antony.²⁰⁹ Antony promptly presented him with three cities, Larissa, Arethusa and Hierapolis which was previously called Bambyce, drawing a comparison between the fates of Monaeses and Themistocles²¹⁰ and between his own abundant wealth and generosity and those of the Persian kings. However, when the Parthian king summoned Monaeses to return, sending him a 'right hand',²¹¹ Antony gladly took the opportunity of sending him back. In reality his plan was to deceive Phraates by pretending that he had no intention of fighting, and the only demand he made was for the return of the Roman standards which had been captured when Crassus was defeated,²¹² and the release of the survivors from that campaign. Antony himself, after sending Cleopatra back to Egypt, at once marched through Arabia and Armenia to a place where he had arranged for his own forces to be joined by those of the various kings who were his allies.²¹³ There were many of these rulers, but the most powerful of them was Artavasdes, the king of Armenia,²¹⁴ who provided six thousand cavalry and seven thousand infantry. Here Antony held a review of his army. The Romans themselves numbered sixty thousand, together with the cavalry brigaded with the Romans, numbering ten thousand Iberians and Celts.²¹⁵ The other nations contributed a total of about thirty thousand men, together with cavalry and light-armed troops. And yet we are told that this immense concentration of strength, which alarmed even the Indians beyond Bactria and made all Asia tremble, was rendered useless to Antony because of his attachment to Cleopatra. Such was his passion to spend the winter with her that he took the field prematurely²¹⁶ and conducted the whole campaign in a disorderly fashion. It was as if he were no longer the master of his own judgement, but rather under the influence of some drug or magic spell,²¹⁷ for he gave the impression that his eyes were constantly drawn to her image and his thoughts fixed upon hastening his return

rather than upon conquering the enemy.

38. In the first place, then, his best plan would have been to spend the winter in Armenia, to rest his men who were worn out by a march of a thousand miles, and after this to occupy Media in the early weeks of the spring, before the Parthians had moved out of their winter quarters. As it was, he was too impatient to wait and immediately led his army forward, leaving Armenia on his left and traversing the province of Atropatene, which he ravaged. Secondly, his haste was so great that he refused to wait for the engines needed for siege operations, which were transported on three hundred wagons, and included a battering ram 80 feet long. If any of these machines were destroyed, it would be impossible to replace them in time for the campaign, because none of the provinces of upper Asia produce timber which is sufficiently long or hard for these purposes.

Nevertheless, Antony gave orders to leave this equipment behind,²¹⁸ on the grounds that it hindered the speed of his advance: he therefore detached a large force under the command of Statianus²¹⁹ to guard it while he himself began the siege of Phraata,²²⁰ a large city which was the residence of the wives and children of the king of Media.²²¹ But the difficulties of this operation quickly showed him what a blunder he had made in leaving his siege-train behind. Accordingly, he moved his troops close up to the city wall and began to build a mound against it, which his men could only heap up slowly and with great labour. In the meanwhile, Phraates had marched down from Parthia with a large army, and as soon as he discovered that the wagons with the siege-train had been left in the rear he dispatched a strong force of cavalry to attack it. Statianus found himself surrounded, he and ten thousand of his men were killed and the barbarians captured the siege-engines and destroyed them. They also took a large number of prisoners, among whom was king Polemon.²²²

39. Antony's army, as was natural, was deeply discouraged at suffering this unexpected disaster at the very beginning of their campaign. To make matters worse, the Armenian Artavasdes decided that the Romans' prospects were hopeless, withdrew his forces and departed, although he had been the prime mover of the war in the first instance.²²³

The Parthians now came up to the besieging army and used their finest troops to make a demonstration in full armour, during which they shouted insulting threats at the Romans. Thereupon Antony, who was anxious that his army should not lose its offensive spirit and become utterly demoralized by remaining inactive, took with him ten legions, three cohorts of the praetorian guard and all his cavalry, and led them out on a foraging expedition, in the hope that this would be

the best way to draw the enemy into a pitched battle. After he had advanced one day's journey, he noticed that the Parthians were beginning to envelop him and were evidently watching their opportunity to fall upon him as he marched. He therefore hung out the signal for battle inside his camp, but had the tents taken down, as though his intention were not to fight but to retreat, and he then marched past the line of barbarians who were drawn up in a crescent-shaped formation. But he had given orders that, as soon as the legionaries were close enough to attack the enemy's leading ranks, the cavalry should launch a charge. To the Parthians drawn up alongside, the steadiness of the Roman discipline seemed indescribably impressive, as they watched them march past, rank upon rank, maintaining their exact intervals in perfect order and silence and with their spears at the ready. But when the signal was given and the Roman cavalry wheeled and charged with loud shouts, they received their onslaught and repelled it, even though the enemy were upon them so quickly that they could not use their bows. However, when the legionaries joined in the attack, shouting and clashing their weapons, the Parthian horses took fright and backed away, and the Parthians fled before the infantry could get to close quarters. Antony pursued them hard, for he had great hopes that he had put an end to the war, or at any rate won a decisive victory in that one battle. His infantry kept up the pursuit for over six miles and his cavalry for twenty, and yet when the Parthian losses were reckoned up they amounted to a mere thirty prisoners and eighty dead. This news spread dismay and despondency throughout the army, and it came as a terrible shock to the men to discover how few of the enemy they had killed in winning this victory, compared with the crushing defeat they had suffered when the wagons were captured.

The next day they broke camp and started back towards their base at Phraata. On the way they encountered at first only a few scattered troops of the enemy, then larger groups and finally the whole body, who immediately challenged and attacked them from all sides, as if they were a completely fresh army which had never been defeated. The Romans were hard pressed, but at last after much heavy fighting they forced their way through to their camp. Soon afterwards the Medes made a sortie from the town, attacked the Romans' mound and put its defenders to flight. This enraged Antony, and he carried out the punishment which is known as decimation against the troops who had been guilty of cowardice.²²⁴ This meant that they were divided into groups of ten and one man out of each ten, chosen by lot, was put to death. He ordered the rest to be issued with rations of barley instead of with wheat.

40. This was a campaign of great hardship for both sides, and the future looked even more disturbing. Antony had now to reckon with the prospect of famine, since it was no longer possible to maintain his army by foraging without suffering heavy losses in killed and wounded. On the other hand, Phraates knew that his men would do anything rather than endure the hardships of a winter campaign and months of bivouacking in the open, and he was afraid that if the Romans held out and stayed in their camp, his own men would desert him, for the air was already growing heavier with moisture now that the autumn equinox was past. He therefore tried the following trick. He arranged that those of the Parthians who were most familiar with the Roman troops should not harry them so strenuously on their foraging expeditious and other encounters, but should allow them to obtain some provisions; at the same time they should take every opportunity to praise their courage and let them know that the Parthians considered them first-rate soldiers, and that they were admired with good reason by the king. After this they would ride up closer, and, drawing their horses unobtrusively alongside the Romans, they would begin to blame Antony, saying that although Phraates was anxious to come to terms and save the lives of so many brave men, Antony would give him no chance to do so. Instead, he insisted on staying there and waiting for those two powerful and formidable enemies, famine and winter, which they would find it difficult to escape, even if the Parthians escorted them on their way. These tactics were reported to Antony from many different sources, but, although his hopes prompted him to open negotiations, he did not send heralds to the Parthians until he had inquired from the barbarians who had assumed this friendly attitude whether their words expressed their king's sentiments. When they assured him that this was so and that he need have no fear nor suspicion of their offer, he sent some of his companions to repeat his request for the return of Crassus's standards and the Roman prisoners of war, for he did not wish to give the impression that he would be satisfied just to make his escape in safety. However, the Parthian king's reply was that he should not press this matter of the prisoners, but that if he now withdrew his troops he would he guaranteed a safe and unmolested journey, and so within a few days Antony packed up his baggage and broke camp. But although he was an orator who could always dominate a popular audience, and knew better than any man of his time how to produce the kind of speech which would inspire his troops, he found himself too much weighed down by shame and melancholy to make the customary speech of encouragement to the army, and he deputed Domitius Ahenobarbus²²⁵ to do it. Some of the soldiers resented this and felt that they were being treated with contempt, but most of them

were touched to the heart and understood the reason, and indeed felt that they ought to show all the more respect and obedience to their commander on that account.

41. Antony had planned to lead his troops back by the same road that he had come, which ran through level country and was completely bare of trees. But there was a man of the Mardian tribe,²²⁶ who was thoroughly familiar with Parthian customs and had already proved his loyalty to the Romans during the battle for the siege-train; he now came forward and urged Antony to keep close to the mountains on his right during his retreat: above all, he must not expose an army of infantrymen, heavily burdened with equipment, to the attacks of such a large force of mounted archers by marching across open country which did not offer a vestige of cover. This was exactly what Phraates had intended, he said, when he had used these friendly approaches to persuade Antony to raise the siege. But if Antony agreed to his plan, he offered to guide the army by a route which was shorter and better supplied with provisions. When he heard this, Antony thought over what the tribesman had told him. Now that a truce had been arranged, he did not wish to give the impression that he distrusted the Parthians. But as he himself favoured the shorter route and preferred to follow a road which would take them past inhabited villages, he asked the Mardian for a pledge of his good faith. The man offered to let himself be put in chains until he had conducted the army into Armenia.²²⁷ This was done and he proceeded to guide them for two days without meeting any opposition. But on the third day, by which time Antony had dismissed the enemy from his thoughts, and, because of the confidence he felt, had allowed the column to march in a somewhat ragged fashion, the Mardian noticed that the embankment of a river had been recently demolished, and that the stream was pouring over the road directly across their line of march. He saw at once that this was the work of the Parthians, who had diverted the river to obstruct and delay the Romans' retreat, and he warned Antony to keep a sharp look-out and be on his guard, as the enemy must be close at hand. Sure enough, just as Antony had deployed the heavy infantry and leaving gaps for the slingers and javelin throwers to pass through the ranks and advance against the enemy, the Parthians appeared and began to gallop round them, so as to encircle the army and throw it into confusion on all sides. They were at once attacked by the Roman light-armed troops, who were severely harassed by their arrows, but the Parthians suffered just as many casualties from the sling-shot and javelins of their opponents as they fell back. They rallied, however, to make a second attack, which continued until the Celts, massing all their horses together, charged

and scattered them, whereupon the Parthians abandoned their attack for the day.

42. This engagement taught Antony a number of tactical lessons. He now covered not only his rear but his flanks with strong detachments of javelin-throwers and slingers, and arranged his order of march in the form of a hollow square. He also gave orders to the cavalry that they must drive off the enemy when they attacked, but that, after routing them, they must not pursue them far. As a result, the Parthians during the four days that followed suffered just as many casualties as they inflicted. This cooled their ardour and they began to think of returning home, making the excuse that winter had now arrived.

However, on the fifth day Flavius Gallus,²²⁸ one of Antony's senior officers and an exceptionally daring and spirited commander, came and asked permission to take a detachment of light-armed troops from the rear and some of the cavalry from the vanguard, as he felt confident that he could achieve an important success. Antony let him take these troops, and when the Parthians attacked, Gallus drove them off. But he did not gradually give way and draw them on to the legions, as had been done on the preceding days, but held his ground and engaged them more boldly. The officers in charge of the rearguard could see that he was in danger of becoming cut off from them and sent runners to call him back, but he refused to listen to them. Then Titius, the quaestor,²²⁹ it is said, seized hold of his standards, turned them round as if to order the troops to fall back on the main body and blamed Gallus for throwing away the lives of so many brave men. Gallus retorted equally angrily, and ordered his soldiers to stand firm, whereupon Titius turned back alone. But as Gallus continued to push forward, he failed to notice that large numbers of the enemy had now encircled him from the rear. Then at last, when he found himself shot at from all sides, he appealed for help. At this point the officers of the legions – among them Canidius,²³⁰ for whom Antony had an especially high regard – are generally considered to have made a serious blunder. They ought to have wheeled so as to engage the enemy with their whole line at once, but instead they sent only small groups to help Gallus, and waited until each was overwhelmed in turn before sending out reinforcements; and so before they were aware of it they came near to involving the whole army in the defeat and rout of these units. Fortunately, Antony hurried back from the vanguard with his heavy infantry to stem the retreat, and his third legion forced its way through to face the enemy and check any further pursuit.

43. The Romans lost no fewer than three thousand killed, and five

thousand men were brought back wounded to the camp: among them was Gallus, who had been pierced in the front by four arrows. He died of his wounds soon after, but Antony visited the rest of the wounded men, and his affection for them brought tears to his eyes even as he tried to raise their spirits. For their part, the men greeted him with radiant smiles and gripped his hand as he passed: they begged him not to let their sufferings weigh upon him, but to go and take care of himself, and they hailed him as their Imperator²³¹ and told him that they knew they were safe so long as he was well.

Altogether it would be true to say that no other commander of that age ever gathered together an army of such superb fighting qualities, composed as it was of soldiers in the prime of their young manhood, who were capable of great feats both of courage and of endurance. But most impressive of all was the respect, the obedience and the goodwill which they showed towards their general, together with the feeling shared by every man – those with the greatest reputation and those with none, commanders and privates alike – that they preferred Antony's good opinion and goodwill to their own lives and safety: in short, this was an army which could not have been excelled even by the soldiers of ancient Rome. There were many reasons to inspire this devotion, as I have already mentioned, namely Antony's noble birth, his eloquence, his simplicity, his generosity which amounted to extravagance, and the familiar and genial manner which he showed in his amusements and his social intercourse. On this occasion the sympathy with which he treated his men and his readiness to share their distress and attend to their wants had the effect of making the wounded and the sick even more ready to serve him than those who were well and strong.

44. However, the enemy, who only the day before had been exhausted and ready to give up fighting, were now so exultant at their victory and so contemptuous of the Romans that they spent the night close by, expecting that they would soon be able to plunder the empty tents and abandoned baggage of an army in flight. At daybreak they gathered to attack in far greater strength, and at this moment their forces are said to have numbered forty thousand horsemen, as the king had sent even the royal bodyguard to join in the battle. This action proved that he now felt completely confident of success (for he himself was not present at any of the battles). Antony decided to address the troops, and at first he called for a dark robe, as he wanted to make his speech as moving as possible. His friends opposed this idea, and so he appeared in a general's scarlet cloak and spoke to the army, praising the troops who had driven back the enemy and reproaching those who had fled. The former urged him to have confidence in them, while the

latter in the effort to excuse their conduct told him that they were ready to suffer decimation and any other punishment he thought fit, if only he would forget their disgrace and cease to distress himself at it. In reply, Antony lifted up his hands and prayed to the gods that, if some retribution were in store for him to balance his former good fortune, they would allow it to fall upon him alone and grant safety and victory to the rest of the army.

45. On the next day the Romans covered their advance more effectively, and when the Parthians attacked they met with a severe shock. They rode up expecting to have nothing to do but pillage and plunder their enemies, but when they were greeted with a hail of missiles and saw that the Romans were fresh, resolute and eager for battle, they once more grew tired of the struggle. However, when the Romans were obliged to descend a steep slope, the Parthians made another attack and poured their arrows into the column as it wound slowly downhill. At this the infantry, who carried heavy shields, wheeled so as to enclose the light-armed troops within their ranks. Then the legionaries in front dropped on to one knee and held their shields in front of them. Those in the second rank held their shields out over the heads of the first and those behind them took up the same position towards the second rank.²³² This formation, which looks like the tiled roof of a house, makes a dramatic spectacle and provides the most effective defence against arrows, which merely glance off it. The Parthians, however, when they saw the Romans dropping on to one knee, imagined that they were exhausted, and so they put down their bows, gripped their spears by the middle and advanced to close quarters. Then the Romans suddenly leaped to their feet and, joining all together in one great battle-cry, lunged forward with their javelins, speared the front ranks of the Parthians and put the rest to flight. The days that followed saw a series of similar engagements, so that the retreat could proceed only in short stages.

The army was also beginning to suffer severely from hunger, since it could only find small quantities of grain even by fighting, and it was not well supplied with implements for grinding it. Most of these they had been obliged to abandon, since some of the pack animals had died, while many others were needed to carry the sick and wounded. It is said that at this time an Attic *choenix*²³³ of wheat cost 50 drachmas, while loaves of barley were sold for their weight in silver. The Romans had no choice but to fall back on vegetables and roots, but since they could find very few to which they were accustomed they were obliged to try some they had never tasted before, and it was in this way that they came to eat a herb which first drove men mad and then killed them. Those who ate of it lost their memory and became obsessed with the task of moving and turning over every stone they could see, as if they were accomplishing something of immense importance. All over the plain men could be seen stooping to the ground, digging around stones and removing them, and finally they would vomit bile and die, since they had no stores of wine, which is the only remedy against this sickness.²³⁴ The Romans lost many men in this way, and all the while the Parthians kept up their attacks.

Antony, so the story goes, often exclaimed, ‘O, the Ten Thousand!’ This was to show his admiration for Xenophon’s army, which made an even longer march from Babylon to the sea and succeeded in forcing its way through to safety against even stronger opposition.²³⁵

46. All this time the Parthians had still been unable to tangle up the Roman ranks or to draw them apart. So, after being defeated and put to flight in many engagements, they began once more to fraternize with the legionaries as they went out to look for fodder or grain, and, pointing to their unstrung bows, they would say that they had now given up their pursuit and were returning home. A few Medes would continue to follow the Romans for one or two days’ march, but would cause them no trouble, as their only purpose was to protect the outlying villages. These professions of friendship were accompanied by embraces and various acts of goodwill, so that once again the Romans’ spirits rose, and when he heard these reports Antony was tempted to direct his march through the plains, as the route through the mountains was said to be waterless. But just as he was about to do this, a man named Mithridates arrived in his camp from the enemy: he was a cousin of the Monaeses who had taken refuge with Antony and been presented with the three cities.²³⁶ Mithridates asked for somebody who could speak the Parthian or the Syrian language and interpret for him, and Alexander of Antioch, who was a close friend of Antony’s, went out to meet him. After Mithridates had announced who he was and explained that they must thank Monaeses for the information he was now going to give them, he asked Alexander whether he could see a range of lofty hills lying ahead of them. When Alexander replied that he could, Mithridates told him, ‘Under those mountains the whole Parthian army is waiting in ambush for you. The great plains stretch right up to the foot of the range, and the Parthians expect that you will be deceived by their friendly advances into leaving the road through the mountains and marching in that direction. It is true that if you cross the heights you will have thirst and exhaustion to contend with, but you are accustomed to these by now; on the other hand if Antony tries to march across the plains he should know that the fate of Crassus awaits him!’²³⁷

47. After he had given this information, the man departed. Antony was greatly disturbed at what he had heard and called together his friends and his Mardian guide, who took the same view as Mithridates. He considered that even if they had no enemy to reckon with the route across the plains involved the risk of much arduous wandering about with no certainty of finding their way because of the absence of clearly marked tracks, and he pointed out that the way through the mountains, although it was rough, offered no other

danger than the lack of water for a single day. So Antony chose this route, and, after ordering his men to carry water with them, led the march by night. Most of his men, however, had no containers and some actually filled their helmets and carried them, while others took water in skins. As soon as Antony set off, his movements were reported to the Parthians, and contrary to their usual custom they started in pursuit while it was still dark. Just as the sun was rising they made contact with the Roman rearguard, who were already tired out with hard marching and lack of sleep, for they had covered 30 miles during the night. The spirits of the Romans sank, for they had never expected that the enemy would overtake them so quickly, and, worse than this, the fighting increased their thirst, for they continued to march on at the same time as they tried to beat off the enemy's attacks. At length the vanguard arrived at a river, the water of which was clear and cool, but turned out to be salty in taste and poisonous in its effects. As soon as it was drunk, it produced painful spasms in the bowels and increased the men's thirst, but although the Mardian guide had warned them of this danger, the soldiers thrust aside anyone who tried to restrain them, and drank from the stream. Antony went along the column begging his men to hold out for a little longer, and telling them that not much farther on they would come to a river whose water was drinkable, and that the track beyond that was too rocky for cavalry, so that in any case the enemy would be forced to turn back. At the same time he ordered the troops who were engaged in fighting to break off the action, and gave the signal to pitch tents, so that the men might at least be refreshed by the shade.

48. Accordingly, the Romans set to work pitching their tents, and the Parthians, following their usual tactics, immediately began to fall back. At this moment Mithridates appeared again, and after Alexander had been sent to receive him, he offered the advice that Antony should allow the army only a short spell of rest and should then resume his march and press on to the next river, for his opinion was that the Parthians would not cross this, but were determined to pursue the Romans until they reached it. Alexander conveyed this message to Antony, and by way of reward brought back from him a large number of golden drinking-cups and bowls. Mithridates stuffed as many of these as he could hide under his clothes and rode away. Then, while it was still daylight, the Romans broke camp and continued their march. The enemy did not attack them, but by their own actions the army contrived to make this the most disastrous and terrifying night they had yet experienced. Those who were known to possess gold and silver were murdered and robbed, many private possessions were stolen from the pack animals and finally Antony's own baggage-train

was attacked and his drinking-cups and expensive tables broken up and divided among the thieves. This outbreak of looting produced great confusion throughout the army, and some of the troops began to lose touch and stray from the main body, for the rumour went round that the enemy had attacked, caused a rout and so broken up the army's formation. At this Antony called for one of his bodyguard named Rhamnus and made him swear that when he gave the order the man would run him through with his sword and cut off his head,²³⁸ for he was determined neither to be taken alive by the enemy nor to be recognized when he was dead. Antony's friends burst into tears, but the Mardian did his best to raise his master's spirits, assuring him that they had now almost reached the river, for there was moisture in the breeze that was blowing from that direction and the cooler air in their faces made it easier to breathe. He explained too that the time they had been on the march proved that the river must be close by, for the hours of darkness were now almost past. At the same time others arrived with the news that the uproar had been caused by the bad behaviour and greed of their own troops. Antony therefore gave the signal to pitch camp, so as to bring his army back to its proper formation after this collapse of discipline and order.

49. It was now daylight and a certain degree of organization and tranquillity had been established when the arrows of the Parthians began to fall upon the rearguard and the light-armed troops were given the signal to engage. The infantry took up the same defensive formation as before so as to cover one another with shields,²³⁹ and they succeeded in holding off their attackers, who did not venture to move in to close quarters. Following these tactics the head of the column slowly moved on, and at last the river came into sight. When they reached the bank, Antony drew up his cavalry to face the enemy and had his sick and wounded carried over first. But before long even the troops who were holding off the enemy were left free to drink at their ease, for as soon as the Parthians caught sight of the river, they unstrung their bows, told the Romans they could cross over without fear and shouted to them praising their courage. In this way they reached the other side unmolested, and after resting for a while they resumed their march, but at the same time they put no faith whatever in the Parthians' assurances.

On the sixth day after their last engagement they arrived at the River Araxes, which forms the frontier between Media and Armenia. This river is so deep and its current so violent that they expected to find it difficult to ford, and there was a rumour that the enemy were waiting in ambush there, and would attack them as soon as they tried to force a passage. At any rate, as soon as they had made their way

over safely and set foot in Armenia, they kissed the ground and threw their arms around one another for joy, as if they were storm-tossed mariners who had just sighted land.²⁴⁰ But as they marched through this region, which abounded in provisions of every kind, and took to eating and drinking freely after the hardships they had suffered, they began to succumb to dropsy and dysentery.

50. Here Antony held a review of his army, and found that he had lost twenty thousand of his infantry and four thousand of his cavalry, more than half of whom had died not at the hands of the enemy but through disease. They had marched for twenty-seven days from Phraata and had defeated the Parthians in eighteen battles, but their victories had been indecisive and had failed to secure them against attack, because they could never follow them up effectually nor pursue the enemy for more than a short distance. This fact more than any other makes it clear that it was the defection of Artavasdes the Armenian which deprived Antony of the power to finish off the war. For if the sixteen thousand horsemen which he withdrew from the expedition when it was in Media²⁴¹ had been available, armed as they were like the Parthians and accustomed to fighting them, and if they, after the Romans had routed the enemy in pitched battles, had pursued and cut down the fugitives, the Parthians would never have been able to rally their forces and return to the attack as often as they did. For this reason the army was furious with Artavasdes and urged Antony to take revenge on him. However, Antony, since his army had been so much weakened both in manpower and in supplies, refrained for reasons of policy from blaming Artavasdes for his treachery, or from treating him with any less goodwill, friendship or respect than he had shown before. But afterwards, when he carried out a second invasion of Armenia, he sent Artavasdes a succession of invitations and tempting promises, managed to persuade him to come to a meeting and then had him arrested, put into chains and brought to Alexandria. There Antony celebrated a triumph and led the king in it, an action which caused particular offence to the Romans, because it was felt that he was bestowing the honourable and solemn rites of his own country on the Egyptians, all for the sake of Cleopatra. These events, however, took place at a later date.²⁴²

51. Antony now pressed on, for the winter had already set in sharply, and he encountered incessant snow-storms and lost eight thousand men on the march.²⁴³ He himself went down to the Mediterranean coast with a small escort, and at a place between Berytus²⁴⁴ and Sidon called the White Village he waited for Cleopatra to join him. When she was slow in coming he was beside himself, wandering around listlessly; soon he gave himself up to heavy drinking, and yet he could

not endure the tedium of the table, but would jump up from the couch and run out to see if she were coming, until at last she arrived by sea, bringing with her large quantities of clothing and money for the soldiers. But according to some accounts, while Cleopatra presented the clothes, it was Antony himself who took the money from his private funds and distributed it to the army, making it out to be a gift from her.

52. A quarrel now arose between the king of the Medes²⁴⁵ and Phraates of Parthia. This had arisen, so it is said, over the division of the spoils captured from the Romans, but it aroused the suspicions of the Median king, who now feared that his throne might be taken from him. For this reason he invited Antony to come to his help and promised to support him with his own forces in a war against Parthia. This offer greatly raised Antony's hopes, for the one factor which, as he believed, had prevented him from conquering the Parthians, that is the lack of a strong force of cavalry and archers, was now to be supplied to him, and on such terms that if he accepted he would be conferring a favour rather than asking one. He therefore made preparations to march once more into upper Asia through Armenia, and there to join forces with the Median king at the River Araxes and reopen the war.

53. Meanwhile, at Rome, Octavia was becoming anxious to sail east and join Antony. Most people agree²⁴⁶ that Octavian allowed her to do this not so much to give her pleasure, but rather to give himself a plausible pretext for declaring war, if she were neglected or insulted by her husband. When Octavia arrived in Athens²⁴⁷ she received letters from Antony in which he told her to stay there and explained the plans for his new expedition. Octavia, although she was hurt by this news and saw through Antony's excuses, nevertheless wrote asking him where he wished to have the things sent which she was bringing him, for she had come out with large stores of clothing for his troops, many pack animals and money and presents for Antony's staff and his friends, and besides all this two thousand picked men splendidly equipped with full armour to serve as his praetorian guards.²⁴⁸ Octavia sent one of Antony's friends whose name was Niger to give him this news, and in delivering it he praised and complimented her, as indeed she deserved.

Cleopatra now saw that her rival was preparing to challenge her influence at close quarters. She was afraid that if to her natural dignity and her brother's power Octavia could once add the charm of her daily society and her affectionate attention, she would win complete control of her husband and make her position unassailable. So she pretended to be consumed with the most passionate love for

Antony, adopted a rigorous diet and succeeded in making her body waste away. Whenever Antony came near her she would fix her eyes on him with a look of rapture, and whenever he left her appearance would give hints that she was languishing and on the verge of collapse. She took great pains to arrange that he should often see her in tears, and then she would quickly wipe them away and try to hide them as if she did not wish him to notice, and she kept up this elaborate performance all the time that he was preparing to march from Syria and join the king of Media.²⁴⁹ Her flatterers also worked hard upon Antony at this time. They told him that he must be an insensitive brute with a heart of stone, for here was a woman who was utterly devoted to him alone, and he was killing her.²⁵⁰ Octavia, they made out, had married him as a matter of political convenience to suit her brother's interests, and she enjoyed the title of his wife: but Cleopatra, who was the sovereign of many nations, had been content to be called his lover, and she did not shun this name nor think it unworthy of her so long as she could see him and spend her life with him, but if he drove her away it would be the death of her. In the end they so melted and unmanned him that he began to believe she would take her own life if he left her. And so he returned to Alexandria and put off his Median expedition until the summer, in spite of the fact that Parthia was said to be greatly weakened by internal dissensions. Later, however, he made a journey to Media²⁵¹ and restored his friendly relations with the king. Then, after arranging the betrothal of one of the king's daughters, who was still only a young child, to one of his sons by Cleopatra,²⁵² he returned to Egypt, but by this time his thoughts were taken up by the impending war between Octavian and himself.

54. When Octavia returned from Athens the view was taken that Antony had insulted her outrageously, and Octavian told her that she must now set up her own household.²⁵³ But she refused to leave her husband's house, in fact she even begged Octavian, unless he had already made up his mind to declare war for quite different reasons, to ignore Antony's behaviour towards her, for it would be intolerable, she pleaded, to have it said of the two greatest commanders in the world that they had plunged the Roman people into civil war, the one out of love and the other out of jealousy over a woman.²⁵⁴ These were her words and her actions added weight to them. She went on living in her husband's house as if he were at home, and she looked after Antony's children, not only those whom she had borne him but also Fulvia's, with a truly noble devotion and generosity of spirit. She also entertained any friends of Antony's who were sent to Rome either on business or to solicit or exercise posts of authority, and she did her

utmost to help them obtain whatever they wanted from Octavian. But in this way she unintentionally did great harm to Antony's reputation, since he was naturally hated for wronging such a woman.

Antony also aroused great resentment because of the distribution of territory which he carried out in Alexandria in favour of the children.²⁵⁵ People regarded this as an arrogant and theatrical gesture which seemed to indicate a hatred for his own country. Nevertheless, he assembled a great multitude in the gymnasium²⁵⁶ there, and had two thrones of gold, one for himself and one for Cleopatra, placed on a dais of silver, with smaller thrones for his children. First, he proclaimed Cleopatra queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya and Coele Syria, and named Caesarion as her fellow-ruler. This youth was believed to be a son of Julius Caesar, who had left Cleopatra pregnant.²⁵⁷ Next he proclaimed his own sons by Cleopatra to be Kings of Kings.²⁵⁸ To Alexander he gave Armenia, Media and Parthia, as soon as he should have conquered it, and to Ptolemy²⁵⁹ Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. At the same time he presented his sons to the people, Alexander in a Median costume which was crowned by a tiara and upright turban, and Ptolemy in boots, a short cloak and a woollen hat encircled by a diadem.²⁶⁰ The latter wore Macedonian dress like the kings who succeeded Alexander the Great, and the former the dress of the Medes and Armenians. After the children had embraced their parents, the one was given a guard of honour of Armenians and the other of Macedonians. Cleopatra, not only on this but on other public occasions, wore the robe which is sacred to Isis, and she was addressed as the New Isis.²⁶¹

55. Octavian reported these actions to the senate, and by repeatedly denouncing Antony in public he did his utmost to rouse the Roman people's anger against him. Antony for his part sent a number of messages making counter-accusations against Octavian.²⁶² The most important of these were, first that after capturing Sicily from Sextus Pompey he had not given Antony any share of the island; secondly, that after borrowing some of Antony's ships for this campaign he kept them for his own use; thirdly, that after removing his colleague Lepidus from his position as triumvir and degrading him, he took possession himself of the troops, the territories and the revenues which had been assigned to Lepidus; and, finally, that he had distributed almost all the available land in Italy to his own soldiers and left nothing for Antony's.²⁶³ Octavian's retort to these charges was that he had deprived Lepidus of his authority because he was misusing it, and that as for his conquests in war he was willing to divide these with Antony as soon as Antony offered to share Armenia with him. He added that Antony's soldiers had no claim upon any lands in Italy.

Their rewards lay in Media and Parthia: for had they not added these to the Roman empire by their gallant campaigns under their commander?²⁶⁴

56. Antony was in Armenia when this answer reached him,²⁶⁵ and he at once ordered Canidius²⁶⁶ to march to the coast with sixteen legions. Meanwhile, he travelled with Cleopatra to Ephesus, where his naval force was assembling from all quarters. It numbered eight hundred warships together with merchant vessels: Cleopatra provided two hundred of these,²⁶⁷ as well as 20,000 talents and supplies for the whole army during the campaign. On the advice of Domitius²⁶⁸ and several other friends, Antony told Cleopatra to sail to Egypt and to wait there for the outcome of the war. But the queen was afraid that Octavia might again succeed in reconciling the two antagonists, and so she bribed Canidius to plead for her with Antony, pointing out that it was unjust to refuse a woman who contributed so much to the expenses of the war the privilege of being present at it, and unwise for Antony to depress the spirits of the Egyptians who formed so large a part of their naval force. Besides, as far as he could see there was no indication that Cleopatra was inferior in intelligence to any of the kings who were taking part in the expedition: on the contrary, she had for many years ruled a large kingdom by herself, and her long association with Antony had taught her many lessons in the management of great affairs. And so, since fate had decreed that everything should come round to Octavian,²⁶⁹ these arguments won the day, and when all their forces had been assembled, the two sailed together to Samos²⁷⁰ and there gave themselves up to pleasure. For just as the order had gone out that all the kings, princes, tetrarchs, nations and cities from Syria to the Mareotic Lake and from Armenia to Illyria should bring or send their quota of equipment for the war, so all the Artists of Dionysus²⁷¹ were commanded to present themselves at Samos, and, while almost the whole world round about was filled with sighs and lamentations at the impending war, this single island echoed for many days with the music of strings and flutes, the theatres were packed and choruses competed with one another. Every city sent an ox for sacrifice, and the kings who accompanied Antony vied with one another in the magnificence of their gifts and entertainments, until the word went round, 'If these people spend so much on festivals just to prepare for war, what will the conquerors do to celebrate a victory?'

57. At the end of these entertainments Antony gave the city of Priene to the Artists of Dionysus as their permanent residence. Then he sailed on to Athens,²⁷² and allowed himself to be diverted by a further round of amusements and theatrical spectacles. Cleopatra for her part felt

jealous of the honours which the city had paid to Octavia – for the Athenians were particularly devoted to her²⁷³ – and tried to make herself popular with the citizens by heaping lavish benefactions on them. The Athenians responded by conferring various public honours upon the queen and sent a delegation to her house to present her with the public decree to this effect. Antony was included in the delegation in his capacity as an honorary citizen, and standing before her he delivered a ceremonial address on behalf of the city of Athens. He also sent men to Rome with instructions to turn Octavia out of her house.²⁷⁴ We are told that, when she left it, she took with her all of Antony's children except Antyllus, the eldest son of his marriage to Fulvia, who was with his father,²⁷⁵ and that she wept tears of anguish at the thought that she would be regarded as one of the causes of the war. Yet it was not she whom the Romans pitied so much as Antony for his folly, especially those who had seen Cleopatra and knew that Octavia was her match both in youth and in beauty.²⁷⁶

58. Octavian was dismayed when he learned of the speed and the scope of Antony's preparations, since he was afraid that he would be forced to fight the decisive campaign that very summer, and for the time being he was not only very short of supplies but had made himself thoroughly unpopular on account of the taxes he had imposed. Full citizens were obliged to pay over one quarter of their income and freedmen one eighth of their property, with the result that there was a violent outcry from both classes against Octavian and disturbances broke out all over Italy.²⁷⁷ For this reason Antony's postponement of the war is now considered to have been one of his greatest errors of judgement,²⁷⁸ since it gave Caesar the opportunity to complete his preparations and allowed time for the indignation aroused by his measures to subside: people felt rebellious at the moment when the money was extorted from them, but, once they had paid it, their anger cooled off.

At the same time Cleopatra behaved insultingly to two of Antony's friends, Titius and Plancus,²⁷⁹ both of them men of consular rank, who had been particularly vociferous in arguing that she should leave the expedition. They now made their escape and passed on to Octavian some information about Antony's will, for they knew what it contained. This will had been deposited with the Vestal Virgins. When Octavian asked for it, the Vestals refused to send it to him, but told him that if he wished to have it he should come and take it himself; and so he did. First of all he read it through privately and marked some passages which would be particularly damaging to Antony, and later he summoned a meeting of the senate and read it aloud to them. Most of the senators had little sympathy for this performance, since

they thought it an extraordinary and intolerable procedure that a man should be called to account while he was still alive for what he wished to have done after his death. Octavian singled out for especial emphasis the clause which dealt with Antony's burial, for he had left instructions that even if he were to die in Rome, his body should be carried in state through the forum and then sent to Cleopatra in Egypt.²⁸⁰ Besides this, Calvisius,²⁸¹ one of Octavian's friends, accused Antony of a number of other excesses in his behaviour towards Cleopatra: he had presented her with the libraries at Pergamum²⁸² which contained two hundred thousand scrolls; at a banquet with a large company present he had risen from his place and anointed her feet, apparently to fulfil some compact or wager; he had allowed the Ephesians to salute Cleopatra as their sovereign in his own presence; and on many occasions, while he was seated on the tribunal administering justice to tetrarchs and kings he would receive love-letters from her written on tablets of onyx or crystal and read them through in public; and on another occasion when Furnius,²⁸³ a man of great distinction and the foremost orator in Rome, was pleading a case, Cleopatra happened to pass through the market-place in her litter, whereupon Antony leaped to his feet from his tribunal, walked out of the trial and accompanied Cleopatra on her way, hanging on to her litter.

59. However, Calvisius was generally believed to have invented most of these accusations.

Meanwhile, Antony's friends in the city also canvassed the people and appealed to them on his behalf, and they sent one of their number named Geminus²⁸⁴ to urge Antony not to sit by and allow himself to be voted out of authority and declared an enemy of Rome. But as soon as Geminus landed in Greece, he was suspected by Cleopatra of being an agent working for Octavia, and she arranged that he should be humiliated by being seated in the least distinguished place at the dinner-table and being the butt of mockery and jokes. Geminus endured all these insults with great patience and waited for an opportunity to speak to Antony. But when he was called upon to explain the reason for his presence, they were seated at dinner, and so Geminus answered that he would keep the rest of his message for a more sober occasion, but that he knew one thing sober or drunk: all would be well if Cleopatra went back to Egypt. Antony was furious at this reply, but Cleopatra put in, 'You have done well. Geminus, to confess the truth without being put to the torture.'²⁸⁵ Geminus escaped a few days later and returned to Rome.

Cleopatra's flatterers also succeeded in driving away many other friends of Antony's, who found these creatures' drunken antics and

ribald buffoonery more than they could tolerate. Among those who left him at this time were Marcus Silanus and Dellius the historian.²⁸⁶ Dellius also mentions that he was afraid of a plot against his life, which Glaucus the physician warned him had been organized by Cleopatra. It appears that he had offended her on one occasion at supper by remarking that Antony's friends were served with vinegar, while at Rome Sarmentus, one of Octavian's little boy-friends or (as the Romans call them) *deliciae*, was drinking Falernian.²⁸⁷

60. As soon as Octavian had completed his preparations, he had a decree passed declaring war on Cleopatra²⁸⁸ and depriving Antony of the authority which he had allowed a woman to exercise in his place.²⁸⁹ Octavian also gave it out that Antony had allowed himself to fall under the influence of drugs,²⁹⁰ that he was no longer responsible for his actions and that the Romans were fighting this war against Mardion the eunuch and Potheinus and Cleopatra's hairdresser Iras and her waiting-woman Charmion, since it was they who were mainly responsible for the direction of affairs.

Here I may mention a number of prodigies which are said to have heralded the outbreak of war. Pisaurum,²⁹¹ a city near the Adriatic which Antony had colonized, was suddenly engulfed by an earthquake. One of the marble statues of Antony near Alba was seen to ooze with sweat, and the moisture in spite of being wiped away continued to flow. At Patras the Temple of Hercules was destroyed by lightning, and in Athens the figure of Dionysus in the group known as the Battle of the Giants was torn loose by the wind and hurled down into the theatre. Now Antony, as I have mentioned earlier in this Life, claimed to be descended from Hercules,²⁹² and because he liked to associate himself with Dionysus in his manner of living he had been given the name of the New Dionysus.²⁹³ The same storm also fell upon the colossal statues of Eumenes and Attalus at Athens, on which Antony's name had been inscribed,²⁹⁴ and overturned them, while the other sculptures nearby remained undisturbed. Besides this, Cleopatra's flagship was named Antonias, and here too an alarming portent was observed. A number of swallows had built their nests under the stern, but other swallows attacked them, drove them out and killed their young.

61. When the two sides had mobilized for the war, Antony's fleet numbered at least five hundred warships, including many vessels which were 'eights' or 'tens',²⁹⁵ and were fitted out with elaborate decorations as though they were intended for a festival, while his army consisted of a hundred thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry. The subject kings who came to his support were Bogud the king of Libya, Tarcondemus the king of Upper Cilicia, Archelaus of

Cappadocia, Philadelphus of Paphlagonia, Mithridates of Commagene and Sadalas of Thrace. These rulers accompanied his forces, while other contingents were sent him by Polemon of Pontus, Malchus of Arabia, Herod of Judaea and Amyntas of Lycaonia and Galatia,²⁹⁶ while the king of the Medes²⁹⁷ also provided an auxiliary force. Octavian on the other hand had two hundred and fifty warships, eighty thousand infantry and about the same number of cavalry as Antony. Antony's dominions stretched from the Euphrates and Armenia to the Ionian Sea and Illyria, and Octavian's from Illyria to the Atlantic Ocean and from there back to the seas which bordered Etruria and Sicily. As for Africa, Octavian held the Mediterranean coast opposite Italy, Gaul and Iberia as far as the Pillars of Hercules, while Antony controlled the region that extends from Cyrene to Ethiopia.

62. By this time Antony had become so much of an appendage to Cleopatra that, although he was far stronger than Octavian on land, he was determined that his victory should be gained by his fleet. He insisted on this merely to please the queen, even though he could see that he was so short of seamen that his captains were impressing travellers, mule-drivers, reapers and boys not yet of military age from Greece, that country that had 'endured so much'.²⁹⁸ Even then his crews were still below strength, with the result that the vessels were undermanned and wretchedly handled. Octavian's fleet, by contrast, consisted of ships which had not been built to an ostentatious height nor designed for show, but were fully manned, fast sailing and easy to manoeuvre.²⁹⁹ He had concentrated his fleet at Tarentum and Brundisium, and now sent a message to Antony challenging him not to waste any more time, but to come with his forces: Octavian would then leave harbour anchorages free for his fleet to use and would withdraw his army the distance of a day's ride inland, until Antony had safely disembarked and established his camp. Antony retorted in equally boastful language, challenging Octavian to meet him in single combat, even though he was the older man. If Octavian declined this, Antony demanded that they should fight out the issue at Pharsalus, as Julius Caesar and Pompey had done before them. However, while Antony's fleet was anchored off Actium, where the city of Nicopolis³⁰⁰ now stands, Octavian stole a march on him by crossing the Ionian Sea³⁰¹ and seizing a town in Epirus named Toryne, the name of which means 'ladle'. When Antony's friends showed alarm at this, as their own army had not yet come up, Cleopatra made a joke of it and asked mockingly, 'What is so terrible about Caesar's sitting on the ladle?'³⁰²

63. A little later the enemy sailed against Antony's fleet at daybreak, and he was afraid that his ships might be captured before his soldiers

could arrive to go aboard them. He therefore armed his oarsmen and paraded them on the decks so as to make the best possible show. Then he drew up the vessels near the mouth of the gulf of Actium with their banks of oars raised out of the water and held in readiness for the strike, and with their bows pointing towards the enemy, as if they were fully manned and ready to engage. Octavian was outwitted by this manoeuvre and retired. Antony was also considered to have made a skilful move by erecting some earthworks to cut off the enemy from the supply of drinkable water, since there were few springs in the neighbourhood, and even these were of poor quality.

It was also at this time that he behaved with great generosity – although quite against Cleopatra's inclinations – to Domitius.³⁰³ The man was already suffering from fever, and he put off in a small boat and went over to Octavian; Antony, although he was deeply grieved by his friend's desertion, sent his baggage and all his friends and servants after him. Domitius died almost immediately after his departure, as if in response to the discovery of his treachery and disloyalty.

Some of the subject kings also chose this moment to change sides, and Amyntas and Deiotarus³⁰⁴ went over to Octavian. Moreover, since his fleet proved unsuccessful in every one of its operations and always arrived too late to give any help, Antony was obliged to pay more attention to his land forces. They were under the command of Canidius, and he too, now that he recognized the danger in which they stood, reversed the attitude he had taken up before³⁰⁵ and advised Antony to send Cleopatra away, to withdraw his troops into Thrace or Macedonia and to trust to a land battle to decide the issue. Dicomus, the king of the Getae, had promised to support him with a powerful army, and there would be no disgrace, Canidius urged, in giving up the control of the sea to Octavian, since his forces had been trained in naval operations during the Sicilian campaign against Sextus Pompey.³⁰⁶ What would be really dreadful would be for Antony, who was as experienced in fighting on land as any commander living, to fail to take advantage of the superior numbers and equipment of his legions, but to distribute his fighting men among the ships and fritter away his strength. But in spite of anything that Canidius could say, it was Cleopatra's choice that the war should be decided at sea which finally prevailed. The truth was that her thoughts were already turning towards flight, and she was arranging matters not so as to contribute to a victory but to make her escape in the event of defeat.

It happened also that there were two long walls that stretched from Antony's camp down to the naval base, and Antony was in the habit of walking between these without suspecting any danger. Octavian was

informed by a slave that Antony could be captured as he passed down this route, and so he sent a patrol to ambush him. The soldiers almost achieved their purpose, but they jumped to their feet a moment too soon and seized a man who was in front of Antony, while Antony himself ran off and just succeeded in escaping.

64. When he had finally decided to fight at sea, Antony had all the other ships burned except for the sixty Egyptian ones, and manned the best and largest of his own from triremes to 'tens':³⁰⁷ in these he embarked twenty thousand heavy infantry and two thousand archers. It was on this occasion, we are told, that one of the centurions from the legions, who had fought in innumerable battles under Antony and whose body was seamed with scars, suddenly burst out as Antony was passing by: 'General, how can you distrust this sword and these wounds of mine and put all your hopes in rotten timbers? Let the Egyptians and Phoenicians do their fighting at sea. Give us the land, where we know how to stand foot to foot and conquer our enemies or die.' To this Antony made no reply. All he did with a look and a gesture of his hand was to encourage the man to take heart, and then he passed on. And in fact it seems that he had little enough confidence himself, because when the captains of his ships proposed leaving their sails behind, he gave orders that they should be put aboard on the pretext that they must not allow a single one of the enemy to escape.

65. On that day and throughout the three that followed, a strong wind blew and the sea ran so high that it was impossible to engage. But on the fifth day the wind dropped, the sea grew calm and the two fleets met.³⁰⁸ Antony together with Publicola took command of the right wing, Coelius was in charge of the left and Marcus Octavius and Marcus Insteius the centre.³⁰⁹ Octavian posted Agrippa on the left and took the right wing himself.³¹⁰ Antony's army was commanded by Canidius and Octavian's by Taurus,³¹¹ but both generals drew up their forces along the shore and remained inactive. As for the two commanders, Antony made the round of all the ships in a small rowing boat. He urged the soldiers to rely on the weight of their vessels and to stand firm and fight exactly as if they were on land, and at the same time he ordered the sea captains to receive the shock of the enemy's warships as if they were lying quietly at anchor and to hold their positions in the narrow and difficult passage at the mouth of the gulf. Octavian, so the story goes, had left his tent while it was still dark and was on his way to visit his fleet when he met a man driving an ass. He asked his name and the man, who recognized him, replied: 'My name is Lucky and my ass is named Conqueror.' For that reason, when Octavian set up many of the beaks of the captured ships after the battle to decorate the place,³¹² he also erected a bronze statue

of a man and an ass.

After he had inspected the dispositions of the rest of his fleet, he was rowed in a small boat to the right wing, and there he saw to his astonishment that the enemy were lying motionless in the narrows, for their ships looked as though they were riding at anchor. For some while he believed that this was really the case and kept his own ships at about a mile's distance. But about noon a breeze sprang up from the sea. By this time Antony's men had become impatient at waiting so long for the enemy, and since they felt confident that the height and the size of their ships made them invincible, they got the left wing of the fleet under way. Octavian was overjoyed to see this and ordered the rowers of his right wing to back water, so as to lure the enemy out of the gulf and its narrow entrance. His plan was to surround them with his more agile craft and fight at close quarters, where he was confident that he would have the advantage over his opponents' large and undermanned galleys which were slow and difficult to manoeuvre.

66. When the opposing battle-lines first met, the ships did not attempt to ram or crush one another at all. Antony's vessels, because of their great weight, were not making the speed which is required to stave in an opponent's timbers. Octavian's, on the other hand, deliberately avoided a head-on collision with their enemies' bows, which were armoured with massive plates and spikes of bronze, nor did they even venture to ram them amidships, since their beaks easily snapped off against hulls which were constructed of huge square timbers lashed and bolted together with iron. And so the fighting took on much of the character of a land battle, or, to be more exact, of an attack upon a fortified town. Three or four of Octavian's ships clustered round each one of Antony's and the fighting was carried on with wicker shields, spears, poles and flaming missiles, while Antony's soldiers also shot with catapults from wooden towers. Agrippa then began to extend his left wing, so as to outflank the enemy. Publicola, to counter this manoeuvre, was obliged to advance against him and so became separated from the centre, which was thrown into confusion and was promptly engaged by the force commanded by Arruntius.³¹³ At this moment, while neither side had gained a decisive advantage, Cleopatra's squadron of sixty ships was suddenly seen to hoist sail and make off through the very midst of the battle. They had been stationed astern of the heavy ships, and so threw their whole formation into disorder as they plunged through. The enemy watched them with amazement, as they spread their sails before the following wind and shaped their course for the Peloponnese. And it was now that Antony revealed to all the world that he was no longer guided by

the motives of a commander nor of a brave man nor indeed by his own judgement at all: instead, he proved the truth of the saying which was once uttered as a jest,³¹⁴ namely that a lover's soul dwells in the body of another, and he allowed himself to be dragged along after the woman, as if he had become a part of her flesh and must go wherever she led him. No sooner did he see her ships sailing away than every other consideration was blotted out of his mind, and he abandoned and betrayed the men who were fighting and dying for his cause. He got into a five-banked galley, and taking with him only Alexas the Syrian and Scellius,³¹⁵ he hurried after the woman who had already ruined herself and would soon destroy Antony as well.

67. Cleopatra recognized him and hoisted a signal on her ship, whereupon Antony came up and was taken on board, but he neither saw her, nor was seen by her. Instead, he went forward by himself into the bows and sat down without a word, holding his head between his hands. Presently, several light Liburnian vessels³¹⁶ from Octavian's fleet were seen coming up in pursuit. Antony ordered the ship to be turned to face them and held them all off except for the vessel commanded by Eurycles the Spartan,³¹⁷ who confidently came up close and stood on the deck brandishing a spear, as though to hurl it at Antony. When Antony stood up in the bows and shouted out, 'Who is it who pursues Antony?' the answer came back, 'I am Eurycles, the son of Lachares, and I come armed with Octavian's fortune to avenge my father's death.' This Lachares had been involved in a charge of piracy and had been beheaded on Antony's orders. Eurycles did not attack Antony's vessel, but he rammed the other admiral's galley – for there were two of them – and spun her round like a top, so that she fell foul of them, broadside on. Eurycles also captured a second ship, which contained valuable plate and furniture. When he had sailed off, Antony flung himself down in the same position and refused to move. For three days he stayed by himself in the bows of the ship; all this time he felt either too angry or too ashamed to see Cleopatra, and he then put in at Taenarum. It was here that Cleopatra's waiting-women first persuaded the two to speak to one another, and then later to eat and sleep together.

By this time several of their heavy transports and some of their friends began to rally to them from the general rout. Their news was that the fleet had been utterly destroyed, but they believed that the army still held together. When he heard this, Antony sent messengers to Canidius with orders to withdraw the army as quickly as he could through Macedonia into Asia. As for himself, he intended to sail from Taenarum to Libya, but at the same time he picked out one of the transports which carried a great quantity of money and a number of

precious utensils of silver and gold belonging to the royal household: this ship he presented to his friends, and urged them to divide up the treasure and save themselves. They refused his offer with tears in their eyes, but Antony comforted them with all the warmth and kindness imaginable and entreated them to accept his gift. Finally he sent them away, after writing to Theophilus, his steward in Corinth,³¹⁸ with instructions that he should give them refuge and keep them hidden until they could make their peace with Octavian. This Theophilus was the father of Hipparchus,³¹⁹ who was the most influential of all Antony's followers: yet he was the first of Antony's freedmen to go over to Octavian's side, and he afterwards settled in Corinth.

68. This was how matters stood with Antony. At Actium his fleet continued to hold out for several hours against Octavian, and it was only after the ships had been severely battered by a gale, which blew head on against them, that his men unwillingly surrendered at about four in the afternoon. Not more than five thousand lost their lives,³²⁰ but three hundred ships were captured, as Octavian has recorded.³²¹ Up to this moment only a few people knew that Antony had fled, and those who heard the news at first found it impossible to believe that he should have run away and left them, when he had nineteen legions of infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, all of them undefeated. After all, Antony had had plenty of experience of fortune in all her moods, and was inured to the reverses and vicissitudes of innumerable campaigns. His soldiers yearned to see him and were confident that he would appear from one quarter or another: indeed, such was their loyalty and courage that, even after his flight had become common knowledge, they still held together for seven days and ignored every approach made to them by Octavian. It was only when their general Canidius left the camp and stole away at night that the soldiers, finding themselves completely destitute, cut off from their supplies and betrayed by their commanders, finally went over to the conqueror.

After these events Octavian sailed to Athens and made a settlement with the Greeks. He found that the cities were suffering great hardship, because they had been robbed of money, slaves and pack animals, and he proceeded to arrange for the distribution of all the supplies of grain which had not been used in the war. My great grandfather Nicarchus used to relate how all the citizens of our native town of Chaeronea³²² were forced to carry on their shoulders a certain quantity of wheat down to the sea at Anticyra,³²³ and how they were urged on by the whip. They had already carried down one consignment in this fashion, a second had been measured out ready for transport and then the news arrived of Antony's defeat. That was

what saved the city, for all his agents and soldiers immediately fled, and the inhabitants were left to share out the wheat among themselves.

69. When Antony landed on the coast of Libya, he sent Cleopatra ahead into Egypt from Paraetonium,³²⁴ and was able to enjoy all the solitude he could desire. He wandered about the country attended by only two friends, the one a Greek named Aristocrates, who was a rhetorician,³²⁵ and the other a Roman, one Lucilius, about whom I have already written elsewhere,³²⁶ describing how at Philippi he tried to help Brutus escape by impersonating him and giving himself up to his pursuers. Because of this action Antony spared Lucilius's life, and he remained faithful and loyal through all his misfortunes to the very end.

When the man whom Antony had put in command of the troops in Libya³²⁷ also took them over to Octavian, Antony tried to kill himself but was prevented by his friends, who persuaded him to come to Alexandria. There he found Cleopatra on the point of embarking upon a perilous and ambitious enterprise. The isthmus,³²⁸ which divides the Red Sea from the Mediterranean and is generally regarded as the boundary between Africa and Asia, measures at its narrowest point less than 40 miles across. It was here that Cleopatra intended to raise her ships out of the water and haul them overland.³²⁹ Her plan was then to embark a large sum of money and a strong escort, launch the vessels in the Red Sea and settle beyond the frontiers of Egypt, leaving the dangers of war and captivity far behind her. But the Arabs of the kingdom of Petra³³⁰ set fire to the first ships that were brought across, and, since Antony still imagined that his army at Actium had remained loyal, Cleopatra abandoned the attempt and posted her troops to guard the approaches to Egypt.

Meanwhile, Antony abandoned the city and the company of his friends and went to live on the island of Pharos, in a house which he had built on a jetty running into the sea.³³¹ There he spent his time as a fugitive from humanity, and said that he asked for nothing better than to follow the example of Timon, since his own fate had been so similar. Like Timon he had been wronged and treated with ingratitude by his friends, and for this reason he distrusted and hated the whole human race.

70. Timon had been a citizen of Athens who lived about the time of the Peloponnesian War,³³² as one can infer from the plays of Aristophanes and of Plato.³³³ There he is mocked as a gloomy and misanthropic character, but although he took pains to avoid or repel almost every kind of human contact, yet he enjoyed the society of Alcibiades – who was at this time an insolent and aggressive young

man – and used to embrace and kiss him affectionately. When Apemantus expressed his amazement at this and asked the reason, Timon told him that he was devoted to Alcibiades because he knew that he would be the cause of infinite mischief to Athens.³³⁴ This Apemantus was the only man whom he sometimes admitted into his company, since the two had much in common, and Apemantus sometimes tried to model his way of living upon Timon's. On one occasion during the Festival of the Pitchers,³³⁵ the two men were dining together, and Apemantus remarked, 'Timon, what an excellent party we are having!' 'We would be', Timon retorted, 'if you were not here.' There is another story that when the Athenians were holding a public assembly, Timon mounted the rostra, and this in itself was such an extraordinary event that the audience immediately fell silent and strained their ears to catch what he would say. Then Timon announced: 'I have a small plot of building land, men of Athens, and on it there stands a fig-tree. Many of my fellow-citizens have already hanged themselves on its branches, but as I propose to build a house on the site, I thought it best to give public notice, so that if any of you are anxious to hang yourselves, you may do so before the tree is cut down.' After Timon's death, he was buried at Halae³³⁶ by the edge of the sea, but part of the shore in front of his tomb subsided and the sea flowed over it and made it impossible to approach. The inscription on his tomb read as follows:

Here, after snapping the thread of a wretched life, I lie buried.
Seek not to know my name, my dear reader. Just go to hell.

This epitaph he is said to have written himself before he died, but the version which is more generally known was composed by Callimachus,³³⁷ and this is how it runs:

Here lies Timon who hated mankind. Do not linger, just pass on by.
Curse me if that is your wish, but pass, that is all that I want.

71. These are a few of the many anecdotes that have come down to us about Timon.

It was Canidius who broke the news in person to Antony that his entire army at Actium had melted away, and soon afterwards Antony learned that Herod of Judaea had declared for Octavian³³⁸ and taken a number of legions and cohorts with him, that the rest of his client-kings were similarly deserting him and that nothing now remained of his power outside Egypt. But by this time such news could not affect him and he seemed happy to rid himself both of his hopes and of his cares at once. He left his retreat by the sea which he had called the Timoneion, was welcomed by Cleopatra into the palace, and once

more plunged the city into a round of banquets, drinking-parties and lavish distributions of gifts. He had Caesarion, the son of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, enrolled in the list of ephebes and conferred the *toga virilis* without the purple hem on Antyllus,³³⁹ his own son by Fulvia. The entertainments, banquets and revels which were given to celebrate these honours engaged the whole city for days on end. Cleopatra and Antony now dissolved that society of Inimitable Livers³⁴⁰ and instituted another, which was at least its equal in elegance, luxury and extravagance and which they called the 'Partners in Death'. Their friends signed up for it on the understanding that they would end their lives together, and they set themselves to charm away the days with a round of exquisite supper parties. Meanwhile, Cleopatra collected together many kinds of deadly poisons, and tested these on prisoners who had been condemned to death, to discover which was the most painless. When she found that the drugs which acted most quickly caused the victim to die in agony, while the milder poisons were slow to take effect, she went on to examine the lethal qualities of various venomous creatures, which were set on a succession of victims in front of her. She carried on these experiments almost every day, and in nearly every case she discovered that it was the bite of the asp³⁴¹ alone which brought on a kind of deep and profound slumber. The venom caused neither groans nor convulsions, but only a light perspiration on the face and a dulling of the perceptions as the sufferers gently lost their strength and resisted any attempt to awake or rouse them, just as people do when they are in a deep natural sleep.

72. At the same time the pair also sent a delegation to Octavian in Asia.³⁴² Cleopatra asked that her children should inherit the throne of Egypt,³⁴³ and Antony that he should be allowed to live out his life as a private citizen in Athens, if he were forbidden to stay in Egypt. But since they had been deserted by many of their friends and scarcely knew any longer whom they could trust, they sent Euphronius, who was their children's tutor. This was because of the action of Alexas of Laodicea.³⁴⁴ This man had become well known in Rome thanks to the influence of Timagenes,³⁴⁵ and he had come to enjoy more influence than any other Greek. He had also worked most effectively upon Antony on Cleopatra's behalf, and had persuaded him to reject all the considerations which might have reunited him to Octavia. Antony had sent him to Herod of Judaea in the hope of preventing the king from changing sides. But then, after Alexas had stayed with Herod for some time and had betrayed his master, he had the impudence to appear before Octavian, relying on Herod's influence to protect him. However, Herod could do nothing to help. Alexas was arrested and

brought in chains to his own country, where he was executed on Octavian's orders. This was the penalty for his treachery which Alexas paid to Antony even within Antony's own lifetime.

73. Octavian rejected Antony's petition, but he sent back word to Cleopatra that she would be granted any request within reason, on condition that she would put Antony to death or expel him from Egypt. At the same time Octavian also sent to Cleopatra one of his freedmen named Thyrsus. He was an intelligent man, and Octavian calculated that he might use his powers of persuasion effectively in delivering a message from a young general to a woman who was conscious of her personal beauty and intensely proud of it.³⁴⁶ When the delegation returned to Cleopatra, this man was granted a longer audience than the others and was so conspicuously honoured that Antony at once became suspicious. He had the man seized and flogged and sent him back to Octavian with a letter explaining that Thyrsus's insolent and arrogant airs had enraged him at a moment when his misfortunes made him all the more easy to provoke. 'If you are displeased at what I have done,' he went on, 'you have my freedman Hipparchus with you.³⁴⁷ Feel free to string him up and whip him, and we shall be quits.' After this Cleopatra tried to calm Antony's recriminations and suspicions by showing him the greatest tenderness and affection. She passed her own birthday in a way which was appropriate to their fallen fortunes, but she celebrated his³⁴⁸ with such a dazzling display of luxury and extravagance that many of the guests came to the banquet as paupers and went away rich men. Meanwhile, Octavian was recalled to Italy by Agrippa, who kept writing from Rome to tell him that his presence there was urgently needed.³⁴⁹

74. For the moment, then, the war remained at a standstill, but when the winter was over, Octavian marched against Antony through Syria, while his other generals advanced through Libya.³⁵⁰ When Pelusium³⁵¹ was captured, it was rumoured that Seleucus had surrendered the city with Cleopatra's consent, but at the same time she allowed Antony to put to death Seleucus's wife and children. Cleopatra had previously built for herself a number of high monuments and tombs of great beauty near the Temple of Isis, and she now collected here all the most precious items of the royal treasures – gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory and cinnamon – and also a great quantity of firewood and tow. Octavian became alarmed at these preparations, and as he drew nearer to the city with his army he continued to send her messages and hints of generous treatment, for he was afraid that Cleopatra might set fire to all this wealth in a fit of despair. However, after he had encamped near the Hippodrome of Alexandria,³⁵² Antony made a sortie and delivered a brilliant attack in which he routed

Octavian's cavalry and pursued them as far as their camp. Elated by his victory, he marched back in triumph to the city, entered the palace, embraced Cleopatra just as he was, in full armour, and presented to her one of his soldiers who had fought most gallantly. Cleopatra gave the man a golden breastplate and helmet as a reward for his valour. He accepted them and the very same night deserted to Octavian.

75. Antony now sent Octavian another challenge to meet him in single combat,³⁵³ but all he received was the retort that Antony might find many other ways to end his life. This answer brought it home to Antony that to die in battle was the most honourable end left to him, and he determined to attack by land and sea at once. It is said that at dinner he told his slaves to fill his cup and serve him more generously than usual, for no man could say whether on the next day they would be waiting on him or serving other masters, while he himself would be lying dead, a mummy and a nothing. But when he saw that his friends were weeping at these words, he told them that he would not lead them into action, since he did not expect that he would come out of the battle victorious or safe, but rather looked to it as a way to die an honourable death.

That evening, so the story goes, about the hour of midnight, when all was hushed and a mood of dejection and fear of its impending fate brooded over the whole city, suddenly a marvellous sound of music was heard, which seemed to come from a consort of instruments of every kind, and voices chanting in harmony, and at the same time the shouting of a crowd in which the cry of Bacchanals and the ecstatic leaping of satyrs were mingled, as if a troop of revellers were leaving the city, shouting and singing as they went. The procession seemed to follow a course through the middle of the city towards the outer gate, which led to the enemy's camp, and at this point the sounds reached their climax and then died away. Those who tried to discover a meaning for this prodigy concluded that the god Dionysus, with whom Antony had associated and whom he had sought above all to imitate, was now abandoning him.³⁵⁴

76. As soon as it was light,³⁵⁵ Antony posted his infantry on the hills in front of the city and watched his ships as they put out and advanced against the enemy. Then, as he still believed that his fleet might achieve something, he stood and waited for the issue of the battle at sea. But his crews, as soon as they drew near the enemy, raised their oars in salute and, when their greeting was returned, they went over to Octavian as one man, and so the two fleets now combined into one, changed their course and headed straight for the city. No sooner had Antony witnessed this than he found himself abandoned by the

cavalry, which likewise deserted to the enemy, and finally when his infantry was routed he retreated into the city, crying out in his rage that Cleopatra had betrayed him to the very men he was fighting for her sake.³⁵⁶ Then the queen, in terror at his fury and despair, fled to her tomb, let down the hanging doors which were strengthened with bars and bolt and sent messengers to tell Antony that she was dead. Never doubting the message, he said to himself, 'Why delay any longer, Antony? Fate has taken away the one excuse which could still make you cling to life,' and went into his room. There, as he unbuckled his armour and laid the pieces aside, he exclaimed, 'O, Cleopatra, it does not hurt me to lose you, for I shall soon be with you, but I am ashamed that so great a commander should prove in the end to have less courage than a woman.'

Now Antony had a faithful servant, whose name was Eros. He had long ago made this man swear to kill him if the need arose,³⁵⁷ and he now urged him to carry out his promise. Eros drew his sword and raised it as if he were about to strike his master, but suddenly turned away and killed himself.³⁵⁸ As he fell at his master's feet, Antony cried out, 'That was well done. Eros. You have shown me what I must do, even if you had not the heart to strike the blow yourself.' Then he stabbed himself with his own sword through the belly and fell upon the bed. But the wound did not kill him quickly. Presently, as he lay prostrate, the bleeding stopped and he came to himself and implored the bystanders to put him out of his pain. But they ran out of the room and left him writhing in agony and crying for help, until Cleopatra's secretary, Diomedes, arrived with orders from the queen to bring him to the tomb.

77. When he understood that Cleopatra was still alive, Antony eagerly ordered his slaves to lift him up, and they carried him in their arms to the doors of the building. Even then Cleopatra would not allow the doors to be opened, but she showed herself at a window and let down cords and ropes to the ground. The slaves fastened Antony to these and the queen pulled him up with the help of her two waiting-women, who were the only companions she had allowed to enter the tomb with her. Those who were present say³⁵⁹ that there was never a more pitiable sight than the spectacle of Antony, covered with blood, struggling in his death agonies and stretching out his hands towards Cleopatra as he swung helplessly in the air. The task was almost beyond a woman's strength, and it was only with great difficulty that Cleopatra, clinging with both hands to the rope and with the muscles of her face distorted by the strain, was able to haul him up, while those on the ground encouraged her with their cries, and shared her agony. When she had got him up and laid him upon a bed, she tore

her dress and spread it over him, beat and lacerated her breasts, and smeared her face with the blood from his wounds. She called him her lord and husband³⁶⁰ and commander, and almost forgot her own misfortunes in her pity for his. Antony calmed her lamentations and called for a cup of wine, either because he was thirsty or because he hoped it might hasten his death. When he had drunk it, he urged her to think of her own safety, if she could do this without dishonour, and told her that of all Caesar's associates she would do best to put her trust in Proculeius.³⁶¹ Last of all, he begged her not to grieve over this final change in his fortunes, but to count him happy for the glories he had won and to remember that he had attained the greatest fame and power of any man in the world, so that now it was no dishonour to die a Roman, conquered only by a Roman.

78. He was on the very point of death when Proculeius arrived from Octavian. After Antony had stabbed himself and while he was being carried to Cleopatra, one of his bodyguard named Dercetaeus snatched up Antony's sword, hid it and slipped out of the palace. Then he ran to Octavian and was the first to bring him the news of Antony's death, while at the same time he showed him the sword covered with blood. When Octavian heard what had happened, he retired into his tent and wept, for Antony was not only related to him by marriage, but had been his colleague in office and his partner in many great enterprises and battles. Then he brought out the letters they had exchanged, and calling in his friends, he read them aloud to let them hear in what moderate and conciliatory terms he had written, and how vulgar and contemptuous had been all Antony's replies. After this he dispatched Proculeius with orders to make every possible effort to capture Cleopatra alive, for he was fearful for the treasure,³⁶² and he also felt that her presence would greatly enhance the splendour of his triumphal procession in Rome. Cleopatra refused to surrender herself into Proculeius's hands, but she consented to talk to him when he came to the building and stood outside one of the doors at the ground level. This door was strongly secured with bolts and bars, but it was possible to speak through it. There they held a parley in which Cleopatra asked that her children should be allowed to succeed to her kingdom,³⁶³ while Proculeius urged her to take courage and trust Octavian in everything.

79. Meanwhile, Proculeius took careful note of the place, and, when he had made his report to Octavian, Gallus³⁶⁴ was sent to hold a further interview with the queen. Gallus walked up to the door and engaged Cleopatra in conversation, while Proculeius fixed a scaling ladder against the building and entered by the window through which the women had lifted Antony. Then he ran down with two servants to

the door where Cleopatra was standing with her attention fixed on Gallus. One of the waiting-women caught sight of him and screamed aloud, 'Poor Cleopatra, you are caught!' In the same instant the queen turned, saw Proculeius, and tried to stab herself, for she carried in her girdle a dagger of the kind which robbers wear. But Proculeius rushed up, flung both his arms around her, and said, 'Cleopatra, you do yourself and Octavian a great injustice. Do not refuse him this opportunity to show his generosity. He is the gentlest of commanders, but you are acting as if he were a treacherous and implacable enemy.' At the same time he snatched away the weapon and shook out her dress to see whether she had hidden any poison. Octavian also sent one of his freedmen named Epaphroditus, whose orders were to take the strictest precautions to keep her alive, but in other ways to allow her every possible comfort and pleasure.

80. Meanwhile, Octavian made his entry into Alexandria with Areius the philosopher³⁶⁵ at his side. He gave him his right hand and kept up a conversation with him, so as to increase the man's importance in the eyes of the Alexandrians and make him respected on account of this signal honour which Octavian was showing him. When he entered the gymnasium³⁶⁶ and mounted a tribunal which had been erected there, the people were beside themselves with fear and fell on their faces before him. But Octavian told them to rise and assured them that he remitted all the charges that might be laid against the people, first because the city had been founded by Alexander, secondly because he himself admired its beauty and spaciousness and lastly because of his regard for Areius. This was a special mark of honour which he conferred upon Areius, and at his request Octavian also granted a number of individual pardons. Among the men for whom he interceded was Philostratus,³⁶⁷ a man who as an extempore speaker was the superior of any of the sophists of the time. Unfortunately, he had made a completely unfounded claim to be a philosopher of the Academy,³⁶⁸ and for this reason Octavian, who detested the man's whole manner of life, refused to pardon him. So Philostratus allowed his white beard to grow, and then, dressing himself in black, he made a point of following close behind Areius and constantly repeating this verse: 'The wise save the wise, if they are truly wise.'³⁶⁹ When Octavius heard of this, he granted the man a pardon, though he was more concerned to spare Areius embarrassment than to relieve the fears of Philostratus.

81. As for Antony's children, Antyllus, his son by Fulvia, was betrayed by his tutor Theodorus and executed. When the soldiers beheaded him, the tutor contrived to steal a precious stone which the boy wore around his neck, and sewed it into his belt, but although he denied the

theft, he was found guilty and crucified. Cleopatra's children and their servants were kept under guard, but otherwise they were generously treated. However, Caesarion, who was supposed to be Cleopatra's son by Julius Caesar, was sent away by his mother with a large sum of money to travel to India by way of Ethiopia. Before long his tutor Rhodon, a man of the same type as Theodorus, talked him into believing that Octavian would make him king of Egypt and persuaded him to return. It is said that while Octavian was making up his mind how to treat him, Areius remarked to him, 'Too many Caesars is no good thing ...'³⁷⁰

82. Octavian later acted on his advice and had Caesarion executed after Cleopatra's death.

As for Antony, although a number of kings and generals petitioned Octavian to allow them to perform the last rites for him, he would not take the body away from Cleopatra, and she buried it with her own hands and gave it a funeral of royal splendour and magnificence, for which she was granted all the resources she needed. Because of the grief and pain she had suffered – for her breasts were inflamed and lacerated from the blows she had given them – she gladly seized upon her illness as a pretext to refuse food and so release herself without further interference from the burden of living. One of her trusted attendants was a physician named Olympus, to whom she confided her true intentions: it was on his advice and help that she relied to bring about this reduction of her body, and he confirms the fact in a history of these events which he has published.³⁷¹ Meanwhile, Octavian had become suspicious and began to frighten her by uttering threats about the fate of her children. By applying these pressures in much the same way as a general uses siege-engines, he quickly undermined her resistance, so that she gave up her body to be cared for and nourished by those who wished to do so.

83. A few days later Octavian paid a visit to talk to Cleopatra and try to reassure her. She had abandoned her luxurious style of living, and was lying on a pallet bed, but, as he entered, she sprang up and threw herself at his feet. She was dressed only in a tunic; her hair was unkempt and her expression wild, while her eyes were sore and lifeless and her voice trembled uncontrollably; her breasts bore the marks of the cruel blows she had inflicted on herself, and in a word her body seemed to have suffered no less anguish than her spirit. And yet her charm and the vigour of her beauty were still by no means extinguished, and despite her sorry appearance they shone forth from within and revealed themselves in the movements of her face. At any rate, after Octavian had urged her to lie down and seated himself close to her, she tried at first to justify her part in the war, making out

that her actions had been forced upon her by necessity and through her fear of Antony. But as Octavian contradicted her on every point and demolished her excuses, she quickly changed her manner and began to appeal to his pity with prayers and entreaties, as if she still clung above all else to the hope of saving her life. Finally, she handed to him a paper, which was supposed to be a complete inventory of her treasures, but when Seleucus, one of her stewards, made it clear that she was concealing and trying to make away with a number of her possessions, she leaped to her feet, seized him by the hair and pummelled his face. Octavian smiled at this episode and at last restrained her, whereupon she said. 'But is it not outrageous, Caesar, when you do me the honour to come and speak to me in my wretched condition, that I should be accused by my own servants if I put aside a few women's trinkets like these? They were not meant for my poor self, you may be sure, but simply to have some little present by me for Octavia and your wife, Livia, so that I could appeal to them to make you kinder and more merciful.' Octavian was pleased at this speech, because it convinced him that Cleopatra still wished to live. He told her that she was welcome to these possessions and that in everything else too he would treat her more generously than she could possibly expect. Then he took his leave, feeling confident that he had deceived the queen, but the truth was that she had deceived him.³⁷²

84. One of the members of Octavian's staff was a young aristocrat named Cornelius Dolabella.³⁷³ He was by no means insensible to Cleopatra's charms, and now when she pressed him, he contrived to warn her secretly that Octavian was planning to leave and march through Syria with his army, and had decided that she and her children were to be sent away³⁷⁴ within three days. When the queen heard this, her first action was to beg Octavian to allow her to pour her last libations for Antony, and when this request was granted, she had herself carried to his tomb. She was accompanied by the women who usually attended her, and there at the tomb she fell on his coffin and said, 'My beloved Antony, it is only a little while ago that I buried you with these hands. Then they were free, but now, when I come to pour libations for you, I am a prisoner, guarded so that I shall not disfigure this body of mine by beating it or even by weeping. It has become a slave's body, and they watch over it only to make me adorn their triumph over you. But after this you must expect no more honours or libations; these are the last that Cleopatra the captive can bring you. For, although in our lives nothing could part us, it seems that death will force us to change places. You, the Roman, have found a grave in Egypt, and I, unhappy woman, will receive just enough of your country to give me room to lie in Italy. But if there is any help or

power in the gods that dwell there,³⁷⁵ for those here have betrayed us, do not abandon your wife³⁷⁶ while she lives, and do not let yourself be triumphed over in my person. Hide me and let me be buried here with you, for I know now that the thousand griefs I have suffered are as nothing beside the few days that I have lived without you.'

85. So Cleopatra mourned Antony, and she crowned his coffin with a garland and embraced it. Then she ordered a bath to be made ready, and, when she had come from the bath, she lay down and was served with an exquisite meal. Presently, there arrived an Egyptian peasant carrying a basket, and when the guards asked him what was in it, he stripped away the leaves at the top and showed them that it was full of figs. The guards were astonished at the size and beauty of the figs, whereupon the man smiled and invited them to take some, and in this way their suspicions were lulled and they allowed him to bring in his fruit to the queen. When Cleopatra had dined, she took a tablet on which she had already written and put her seal, and sent this to Octavian. Soon afterwards she dismissed all her attendants except for those two waiting-women, and closed the doors of the tomb.

Octavian opened the tablet, and as soon as he read Cleopatra's prayers and entreaties that she should be buried with Antony, he immediately guessed what she had done. His first thought was to go himself to save her life, but he restrained this impulse and sent messengers to hurry and discover what had happened. But it had all moved too swiftly for them. The messengers rushed to the building and found the guards still unaware that anything was amiss, but when they opened the doors they found Cleopatra lying dead upon a golden couch dressed in her royal robes. Of her two women, Iras lay dying at her feet, while Charmion, already tottering and scarcely able to hold up her head, was arranging the crown which encircled her mistress's brow. Then one of the guards cried out angrily, 'Charmion, is this well done?'³⁷⁷ and she answered, 'It is well done, and fitting for a princess descended of so many royal kings.' As she uttered the words, she fell dead by the side of the couch.

86. According to one account, the asp was carried in to her with the figs and lay hidden under the leaves in the basket just as Cleopatra had ordered, and the snake settled on her without her being aware of it. When she picked up some of the figs, she caught sight of it, so the story goes, and said, 'So here it was all along', and, baring her arm, she held it out to be bitten. Others say that it was carefully shut up in a pitcher and that Cleopatra provoked it by pricking it with a golden spindle, until it sprang out and fastened itself upon her arm. But the real truth nobody knows, for there is another story that she carried poison about with her in a hollow pin which she kept hidden in her

hair, and yet no inflammation nor any other symptom of poison broke out upon her body. And indeed the asp was never discovered inside the building, although some marks which might have been its trail are said to have been noticed on the beach on that side where the windows of the chamber looked out towards the sea. Some people also say that two faint, barely visible punctures were found on Cleopatra's arm, and Octavian himself seems to have believed this, for when he celebrated his triumph he had a figure of Cleopatra with the asp clinging to her carried in the procession. These are the various accounts of what took place.³⁷⁸

Octavian was vexed at Cleopatra's death, and yet he could not but admire the nobility of her spirit, and he gave orders that she should be buried with royal splendour and magnificence, and her body laid beside Antony's, while her waiting-women also received an honourable funeral.

So died Cleopatra.³⁷⁹ She was thirty-nine years of age, she had reigned as queen for twenty-two of these, and been Antony's partner in his empire for more than fourteen.³⁸⁰ Antony was fifty-six according to some accounts, fifty-three according to others.³⁸¹ All his statues were torn down, but those of Cleopatra were allowed to stand, because Archibius, one of her friends, gave Octavian 2,000 talents to save them from the fate of Antony's.

87. Antony left seven children by his three wives,³⁸² and of these the eldest son, Antyllus, was the only one to be put to death by Octavian. Octavia took all the rest into her household and brought them up with her own family. For Cleopatra's daughter who bore the same name she arranged a marriage with Juba, the king of Numidia,³⁸³ one of the most gifted rulers of his time, and she brought Antonius,³⁸⁴ another of Fulvia's children, into such high favour with Octavian that, while Agrippa held the first place of honour in his estimation, and the sons of Livia³⁸⁵ the second, Antonius was generally regarded as holding the third, and this was no more than the truth. By her first husband, Marcellus, Octavia had two daughters and a son, also named Marcellus.³⁸⁶ Octavian married his daughter Julia to this boy and adopted him as his son,³⁸⁷ and he gave one of Octavia's daughters in marriage to Agrippa.³⁸⁸ But, as the young Marcellus died soon after his marriage, and as Octavian found it difficult to choose from among his friends a son-in-law in whom he could have full confidence, Octavia proposed that Agrippa should divorce her own daughter and marry Julia himself. First of all she persuaded Octavian, and then finally Agrippa gave way, whereupon she took her daughter back into her house and married her to the young Antonius, while Agrippa married Julia. Antony left two daughters by Octavia, one of whom became the

wife of Domitius Ahenobarbus,³⁸⁹ while the other, Antonia, who was celebrated for her beauty and her virtue, married Drusus,³⁹⁰ who was the son of Livia and stepson to Octavian. Among the children of this marriage were Germanicus³⁹¹ and Claudius. Claudius later became emperor,³⁹² while of Germanicus's children, Gaius ruled in a crazed way³⁹³ for a short time before being assassinated with his wife and child, and Agrippina, who had a son by Ahenobarbus³⁹⁴ named Lucius Domitius, later became the consort of the emperor Claudius.³⁹⁵ This Lucius Domitius was adopted by Claudius,³⁹⁶ who gave him the name of Nero Germanicus. He was the Nero who became emperor in my lifetime, murdered his mother and through his folly and madness brought the Roman empire to the verge of destruction.³⁹⁷ He was the fifth in descent from Antony.³⁹⁸

COMPARISON OF DEMETRIUS AND ANTONY

1 (88). So both men suffered great reverses of fortune. Let us first consider their power and their distinction. The one man owed a good deal to the foundations laid by his father, for Antigonus was the greatest of Alexander's successors, and even before Demetrius was of age he had overrun and conquered most of Asia. Antony's father was a gentleman, certainly, but hardly a man of war,¹ and he left him nothing that would have helped him to win glory; and yet Antony dared to presume to the power that Julius Caesar had exercised, even though he had no claim to it by birth, and he managed to insert himself as a successor to everything Caesar had achieved. He was so successful in this that, relying wholly on his own merits and resources, he was able to divide the whole world in two and take the finer half for himself, and even in his absence to use his assistants and lieutenants to overcome the Parthians on many occasions and to push the barbarian tribes of the Caucasus back to the Caspian Sea.² Demetrius's father was pleased to secure for him Antipater's daughter Phila as a bride despite the mismatch in their ages,³ and regard it as a marriage to a superior; whereas it was seen as a disgrace to Antony that he should be married to Cleopatra, a woman whose power and brilliance outdid all her contemporary monarchs except only the Arsacid.⁴ Antony in fact had made himself so great that others regarded him as worthy of greater things than he himself wished.

2 (89). What of their motives for obtaining their power? There is no criticism here that could be levelled against Demetrius, who was seeking only to master and rule people who were accustomed to being mastered and ruled; but Antony's aspirations were despotic and harsh, for he was seeking to enslave the Roman people at a time when they had only just escaped from Caesar's monarchy. The greatest and most brilliant of his achievements was the war against Cassius and Brutus, and this was fought in order to deprive his country and his fellow-citizens of their liberty. In contrast Demetrius, before he fell upon harder times, was continually bringing freedom to Greece and expelling garrisons from the cities:⁵ how very different was this from Antony, who was so proud of killing in Macedonia the liberators of Rome!

One of Antony's acknowledged good qualities was his lavish generosity: still, in this he is outdone by Demetrius who gave bigger gifts to his enemies than Antony to his friends. True, Antony won acclaim for his orders that Brutus's body should be robed and buried;⁶ but Demetrius granted burial to all his enemies who were killed, and sent his prisoners back to Ptolemy along with money and gifts.⁷

3 (90). When things went well, both men were prone to arrogant and offensive behaviour and to luxurious self-indulgence. Still, no one could say that his taste for the good life or for banqueting ever caused Demetrius to miss any opportunity for action; it was only when he had time on his hands that he imported his pleasures, and his Lamia, like her mythical namesake,⁸ became his diversion when he was wholly relaxed or half-asleep. When he was preparing war there was never any ivy on his spear nor any smell of perfume on his helmet, and he did not go out to battle from the women's quarters as radiant as a flower in bloom;⁹ he stilled the troops of revellers and the Bacchic sprees and became 'the minister of unholy Ares', as Euripides puts it.¹⁰ Never once did he suffer any reverse through pleasures or indolence.¹¹ It was very different with Antony. In paintings we often see Omphale taking away Heracles' club and stripping off his lion-skin;¹² in the same way Cleopatra would often disarm and enchant him into putting aside great deeds and vital campaigns and giving himself instead to the beaches around Canopus and Taphosiris,¹³ strolling along with her happily and playfully. Finally, he ran away like Paris from the battle and hid himself in her lap – except that it was in defeat that Paris fled into the bedchamber,¹⁴ while Antony's flight in pursuit of Cleopatra cost him his victory.¹⁵

4 (91). There again, there was nothing to prohibit Demetrius's multiple marriages¹⁶ – this had been customary among the Macedonians since Philip and Alexander had set the precedent, and Lysimachus and Ptolemy did the same – and Demetrius treated all his wives honourably. Antony in the first place had two wives at the same time,¹⁷ something no Roman had ever dared to do before, and then drove out his wife at home, the one he had lawfully married,¹⁸ as a favour to his foreign and irregular partner. The result was that marriage brought nothing amiss to the one, but the greatest of calamities to the other.

Still, Antony's record shows no case of wanton impiety on the scale of those perpetrated by Demetrius. Antiquarians say that the whole acropolis is kept free of bitches because dogs copulate in public more than any other animal: yet Demetrius had sex with prostitutes actually in the Parthenon,¹⁹ and made many citizen women into prostitutes themselves. And one might at least expect that that sort of excess and

indulgence would have nothing cruel about it, but one cannot even say that about Demetrius's pleasure-seeking, for he allowed and even compelled the dreadful death of the most beautiful and morally upright man among the Athenians as he tried to escape from Demetrius's violent lust.²⁰ In short, Demetrius's lack of self-control wronged others, Antony's wronged himself.

5 (92). The behaviour of Demetrius towards his parents was impeccable; but Antony gave up his mother's brother in exchange for murdering Cicero,²¹ something which was so despicable and inhuman in itself that Antony could barely be excused if Cicero's death had been the price for saving his uncle rather than for destroying him.

As for each man's failures to keep to their sworn promises and treaties, the one taking Artavasdes captive and the other killing Alexander,²² Antony's behaviour does have an acknowledged explanation, for he was abandoned and betrayed by Artavasdes in Media;²³ but many say that Demetrius made up false charges to excuse what he had done, and it was a case of accusing the man he wronged rather than protecting himself against someone who was wronging him.²⁴

Again, Demetrius achieved his successes in his own person, whereas Antony's finest and greatest victories were won by his generals when he was not present himself.²⁵

6 (93). Both men had only themselves to blame for their loss of power, but this happened in different ways. The one was deserted, for the Macedonians went over to the other side;²⁶ the other was the deserter, for he abandoned the people who were risking everything for his sake.²⁷ So the one can be charged with making enemies of his own soldiers, the other with forsaking such goodwill and loyalty.

Neither man's death can be praised, but Demetrius's is the one that deserves more blame. He allowed himself to become a prisoner, and in his captivity he was content to live on for an extra three years devoted to stomach and to wine,²⁸ just like an animal letting himself be tamed. Antony's death was cowardly and pitiful and dishonourable, but at least he did not let his enemy gain control of his person, but before that humiliation he took himself off.²⁹

GALBA AND OTHO

INTRODUCTION TO GALBA AND OTHO

Galba and *Otho* do not form part of the series of Parallel Lives: Plutarch wrote them earlier, in a different series, the Lives of the Caesars from Augustus to Vitellius, and these are the only two of that series to survive. The date of composition is uncertain. Joseph Geiger argued that they were written under Nerva (96–8 CE),¹ but that is a very tight window, and on balance a date under Domitian (81–96 CE) seems more likely, probably before 93.² No wonder, in that case, that Plutarch chose not to extend the series to treat the Flavian emperors themselves, and left Vitellius as the last in the group. Even to get that far will have involved some delicate footwork in handling the part that Vespasian, Domitian's father and the founder of the Flavian dynasty, played in the year of the four emperors, that 'long yet single year' (Tac. *Dial.* 17) of 69 CE. The few references in *Otho* to Vespasian and his forces are brief and uncoloured (chs. 4, 5 and 15, and nn. 20, 26 and 78), but the narrative texture of the closing chapters may suggest some ironies, as we shall see.

The Lives of the Caesars clearly formed an even tighter and more unified series than the Parallels, so much so that the individual Lives make only limited sense in isolation. The first sentence of *Otho* makes it clear that this is a continuing story from the end of *Galba*:

The next day dawned, and the new emperor came out to the Capitol and sacrificed.

Galba itself refers back to what was told in *Nero*:

This was Nymphidius Sabinus, who – as I have already mentioned – was prefect of the praetorian guard along with Tigellinus.

(*Galb.* 2)

Several other passages of *Galba* that seem abrupt or enigmatic would be less so to a reader coming fresh from a fuller narrative in *Nero*:

Nero's plans to escape to Egypt (ch. 2), for instance, or the background to the revolt of Vindex (chs. 4–6), or the explanation that 'these [the rowers] were the men whom Nero had recruited to be soldiers and organized into a single unit' (ch. 15). The biographical structure is affected by this linear narrative thrust from one Life to the next: thus the 'biographical' background to Otho is given not at the beginning of his own Life, but in *Galba* (ch. 19). Still, this should not be overstated.³ The counterpart passage giving the background to Galba himself does come in his own Life (ch. 3), and has clearly not been anticipated in *Nero* (the fact that he was not a central player in the Vindex revolt will here have helped: the reader of *Nero* did not need to know so much about Galba as the reader of *Galba* needs to know about Otho). Nor do we have a similar passage to introduce Vitellius, even if we are told enough to grasp that his was not a personality to command respect (esp. *Galb.* 22, *Otho* 4 and 9). Plutarch is probably waiting till the beginning of *Vitellius* to backtrack and summarize the man's background and character.⁴ It is notable that the *Lamprias Catalogue* – a surviving list of all Plutarch's works, including those that are lost – gives *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, *Gaius Caesar*, *Claudius*, *Nero* and *Vitellius* as separate works, but seems (the text is not quite certain) to give '*Galba and Otho*' as a single book. This would not be the only place where the *Catalogue* shows some sensitivity to Plutarch's pairing strategies,⁵ and it may be that *Galba* and *Otho* hang even more closely together than the other Lives in the series would have done.

This close interconnection of the Lives also affects the themes that they trace. Even within the Parallels we can see an interest in larger, more 'historical' themes as well as the personal and more 'biographical' details (General Intro. II): in these imperial Lives the balance is even more tilted towards the historical. True, he can still contrast his project with one sort of historiography:

A detailed narrative of what happened is appropriate for a pragmatic history, but I too should not omit anything of note in the doings and sufferings of the Caesars.

(*Galb.* 2)

This anticipates the language of similar passages in the Parallel Lives (General Intro. II), for instance *Alexander* 1 or *Fabius* 16 ('But these episodes have been covered by those who have published detailed histories'). But the phrasing is a little different.⁶ It is not just any history that Plutarch here contrasts with his biography, it is 'pragmatic history', a phrase taken from Polybius (1.2.8, 3.47.8, 6.5.2 etc.) and suggesting his concentration on political and military activity.⁷ That would cover, for instance, the detailed information on

the marches of generals like Valens or Caecina which figures in Tacitus, *Histories* 1, but which Plutarch omits as not being part of ‘the doings and sufferings of the Caesars’. And he does not here, as he often does in the *Lives*, define his own interest in terms of the individual’s personality, the ‘little things’ in the phrase of *Alexander* 1 that ‘bring out a person’s character’ (General Intro. II). Here it is simply ‘anything of note’, and indeed there are rather fewer personal details in *Galba* and *Otho* than we might expect or welcome, and fewer than there are in Suetonius’s *Lives* of these two emperors. So we do not hear of the prognostications of Galba’s future principate under Augustus and Tiberius (Suet. *Galb.* 4, Tac. *Ann.* 6.20): possibly these were treated earlier in those other emperors’ *Lives*, but probably they were not (if they had been, we might have expected a cross-reference). There is nothing on Galba’s marriage or his dead son, even though the absence of a biological son was crucial when it came to the adoption of Piso (ch. 23); nothing even on Agrippina setting her cap for him (Suet. *Galb.* 5); nothing, sadly, on his loyal pet dog (Aelian *On the Characteristics of Animals* 5.10; contrast *Them.* 10). *Otho* gives us nothing on the man’s personal appearance (Suet. *Otho* 12, ‘splay-footed and bandy-legged’), or the way he wore a carefully crafted close wig or shaved with moist bread (as Suetonius mentions in the same passage); his love-life does come in, but only because it is historically relevant (Poppaea at *Galb.* 19).⁸

It may be that here *Galba* and *Otho* were atypical of the series of *Lives* of the Caesars: there are some, not wholly secure indications that the *Augustus* was more colourful and personal.⁹ But the difference of these two *Lives*, at least, from the *Parallels* is clear. Given the power now exercised by the one man who dominated the world, the line between imperial biography and history was always likely to be a thin one. Our fragmentary text of the historian Cassius Dio, for instance, has ‘Vespasian too had many omens and dreams ... which will be recounted in his life as well’ (65.9.1), and even though those are likely to be the words of his summarizer rather than of Dio himself it shows how easy it was to read a linear narrative in that way. Even Tacitus’s *Annals* and *Histories* could later be casually mentioned as together forming his imperial *Lives*.¹⁰ These two Plutarch *Lives* were similarly interested in the Caesars as a whole, developing themes that were relevant to the entire principate, not just the individual peculiarities of each emperor and each reign.¹¹

The opening of *Galba* introduces just such a theme:

Plato saw that there was no point in having a good leader and general if an army was unsound and disunited, and thought that the virtue of obedience, like that of kingship, required a noble nature and a philosophic training which would concentrate on achieving the correct balance between humane gentleness

and spirited vigour. There is much in human experience to show that he was right, and particularly the events in Rome after the death of Nero, which demonstrated that nothing is more terrifying than a military force exercising dominant power and driven by uneducated and irrational impulses. Demades compared the Macedonian army after Alexander's death to the blinded Cyclops, with its multiple movements in random and pointless directions; the Roman empire was overtaken by something more like the legendary sufferings and convulsions of the Titans, torn apart in many directions at once and then collapsing back in on itself. The reason was not so much the appetite for rule of those who were declared emperor, but more the greed and indiscipline of the soldiers, who used one emperor after another to dislodge his predecessor as if they were using one nail to drive out another.

The initial quotation is from the *Republic*, where a fundamental concern of Plato was to explore ways in which the 'spirited' element could be properly integrated with the other parts of a person's soul. In Plato's thinking that element corresponds to the military arm of the state, which equally requires careful guidance from a more rational superior class, the guardians or better still a philosopher-king. Otherwise self-destruction threatens, as Plato says in a passage that is particularly echoed here (*Republic* 2.375c–e, later recalled at 9.572a); and Plutarch too may be implying, not unreasonably, that its military arm brought the Roman empire perilously close to self-destruction in 69 CE. The next chapter goes on to explain why this 'greed' was now so intense and uncontrollable. It all, says Plutarch, goes back to Nero's praetorian prefect Nymphidius Sabinus, whose talk of massive donatives raised the soldiers' hopes to a level where they could never be satisfied.

This theme of dangerous, unruly, corruptible legionaries recurs throughout *Galba* and *Otho*. Rhiannon Ash has shown how this continues to be pointed by Platonic allusion (*Galb.* 6 and n. 39), and also how it relates to a gruesome pattern of headlessness: the literal headlessness of the corpses of Galba, Piso and Vinus at the end of *Galba*; the figurative headlessness of the empire when Vindex calls upon Galba to lend himself to 'this powerful body that needs a head' (*Galb.* 4).¹² The troops and the empire have not found an appropriate head by the end of *Otho*, even though the dignity of Otho's death gives a hint of what he might have become. Perhaps, but only perhaps, by the end of *Vitellius* the answer would have seemed to be Vespasian, 'the only emperor up to his time to change for the better' (Tac. *Hist.* 1.50).

In *Galba* and *Otho*, then, Plutarch is writing very recent history indeed, history that is probably less than a quarter of a century old. He would have had access to eye-witnesses, particularly for events in Rome itself but not merely for those: he mentions one of those witnesses, L. Mestrius Florus, in whose company he visited the

battlefield of Bedriacum (*Otho* 14). It was presumably on the same visit that he saw Otho's modest tomb (*Otho* 18). Mestrius was a man of distinction. He rose to be consul under Vespasian, despite having fought on the Othonian side in 69 CE (he fought 'through necessity rather than conviction', says Plutarch, *Otho* 14); he also clearly took Plutarch seriously, and it was presumably through his patronage that Plutarch gained Roman citizenship (his Roman name was 'Mestrius Plutarchus'). Plutarch later gives him several engaging and scholarly contributions to make in *Table Talk* (General Intro. I).¹³ Mestrius was senior enough to be in a position of some authority during the battle, and was probably party to the various councils of war beforehand. This testimony would be invaluable.

It would be wrong, though, to think of Plutarch proceeding as Thucydides had done for the Peloponnesian War, basing his account on oral sources and patiently and critically combining them. His procedure was closer to that which he would later follow in the *Parallel Lives*, following in the main a written source which he would have open in front of him, though always ready to supplement and correct this from further pieces of evidence. What makes this clear is the sustained and systematic similarity of the last third of *Galba* and of *Otho* to Tacitus's parallel account in *Histories* 1–2. The similarities in selection of detail, in narrative articulation, and even sometimes in phraseology can only be explained in terms of shared source material, and presumably a common single source (for otherwise it would be surprising if both authors happened to choose and switch sources at precisely the same points).¹⁴ There are signs that Suetonius drew on the same material, though he too had extra checks on it (including the reminiscences of his own father, who was a participant on Otho's side: Suet. *Otho* 10, cf. n. 75 to *Otho*). Despite the dominance of that single account, we should not underrate the importance of Plutarch's wider reading and conversation, and in ways that go beyond the particular passages where additional sources are quoted: what gave that main source special value and justified its choice would be the way that other writers and oral sources would regularly corroborate what it said. But it would be a matter of corroboration, not of taking diverse material on equal terms and weaving it together to produce a wholly new account.

Identifying that shared source is not easy.¹⁵ At *Otho* 9 Plutarch quotes 'the orator Secundus, who was Otho's secretary' for one explanation of why Otho hurried on the decisive battle: this is probably the Julius Secundus who is a character in Tacitus's *Dialogus* and whose oratory Quintilian respected (10.1.120). But in this Plutarch passage Secundus provides a variant to the more generally accepted explanation, and it is the more usual version that Plutarch

shares with Tacitus.¹⁶ Better candidates for the shared source are Cluvius Rufus, whose account of the reign of Nero was clearly used by Tacitus in the *Annals* and who continued his account at least to include the actions of Verginius Rufus and – one would presume from the citation at *Otho* 3 – of Otho too;¹⁷ and the elder Pliny, whose *History* (unexcitingly known as *From Where Aufidius Bassus Stopped*) extended into the beginning of the Flavian period, and was again used by Tacitus.¹⁸ Both were respected writers: both could have been eye-witnesses to some events and have closely questioned participants about others, rather as Tacitus gets material from the younger Pliny (*Epistulae* 6.16, 20) for his account of the eruption of Vesuvius in *Histories*. Another, slightly less likely candidate is Fabius Rusticus: we do not know that his *Histories* extended beyond the death of Nero, but they may have done.¹⁹ Other names have also been mooted, none particularly plausible.²⁰ At *Otho* 3 Plutarch quotes Cluvius for an item (the new emperor Otho adding ‘Nero’ to his own name in imperial dispatches), so he may well have read him:²¹ true, that item does not figure in Tacitus, which in itself might suggest that Cluvius is not the common source but a secondary authority adduced by Plutarch himself, but there may be other reasons why Tacitus decided to suppress an item that he knew.²² Plutarch quotes Cluvius again in the (later) *Roman Questions* (289c–d), and on balance Cluvius is the best candidate for this common source. But there is really no way of knowing. Syme magisterially dubbed the common source ‘Ignotus’, ‘Unidentified’,²³ and unidentified he must remain.

Unidentified, but not impossible to characterize: the richness of detail in both narratives is clear, together with an interest in broader reflections on the ways of the principate; so is a gift for epigrammatic style, from which both Tacitus and Plutarch borrowed some striking formulations.²⁴ (Nor does Plutarch come out too badly in the stylistic comparison.) Systems of images could be borrowed too, again in a way that presages Plutarch’s technique in the *Parallel Lives*²⁵ – though Plutarch remains thoroughly capable of adding his own images too, in particular one that relates this tearing apart of the empire (*Galb.* 1) to a tragic, Dionysiac frenzy, best seen when the bearer of Galba’s severed head (or rather here ‘face’, Greek *prosopon*, the same word as is regularly used of a tragic mask) runs with it ‘in the way that bacchantes do, often reeling around and waving the spear as the blood ran down it’ (*Galb.* 27).²⁶ This is theatrical stuff indeed, with ‘one [tyrant] brought on stage as the last was taken off’ (*Galb.* 1 and n. 8), and ‘comedy’ turning to ‘tragedy’ as Vinus’s corrupt actions ‘became sometimes a cause and sometimes an excuse for great human suffering and catastrophe’ (*Galb.* 12); and such tragic imagery too is a feature that will recur in the *Parallel Lives* (Intro. *Ant.*).

Those close parallels between Tacitus and Plutarch make the points where they deviate all the more revealing of the distinctive interests of each.²⁷ More interest has centred here on Tacitus's technique, and too often Plutarch has been cast as the dumb partner in this contrast, as if he never made adjustments of his own or shaped his own narrative.²⁸ Yet some of those adjustments are clear, as we have just seen in the case of the Dionysiac imagery. Plutarch also thins the crowd of individuals that populate the pages of Tacitus, and concentrates on a few of the most colourful figures, Vinius rather than Laco, Marius Celsus rather than Valens or Caecina, Suetonius Paulinus rather than Proculus, and leaves the others to make more cameo appearances.²⁹ Verginius Rufus too features prominently, the man who made his choice for the sort of prudent inactivity that had typified all Galba's past life – and a man who was probably still alive when Plutarch wrote, enjoying the serene old age that Galba did not.³⁰ Plutarch is in fact very good at giving the impression of a packed stage and turbulent movement, yet still keeping the main lines of the narrative clear. We can also see some ways in which he has elegantly shaped the end of *Otho* to mirror and reverse themes from the beginning: this man whose earlier life was so erotically textured with the love of Poppaea ends by inspiring an almost erotic yearning in his men (*Otho* 17 and n. 89); the Life that began with a grand imperial entry of the new emperor ends with Verginius Rufus, the man who could have ruled had he so wished, slipping furtively out of his house (*Otho* 18).

The comparison of the two also complicates even further the contrast of 'biography' and 'history', for it is often the historian Tacitus who casts more light on the personal qualities of the emperors and the biographer Plutarch who accentuates the more impersonal collective forces, very much in line with the emphases of that opening chapter of *Galba*. Within his first book Tacitus crafts speeches for Galba, Piso and two for Otho (*Hist.* 1.15–16, 29–30, 38–9, 83–4), all of them revealing the speakers' varying talent for responding to a situation's needs. Plutarch prefers to give one speech to the obscure Antonius Honoratus and another to an unnamed officer (*Galb.* 14, 22): both illuminate the forces that drive the mentality of the military collective, forces to which Galba and Otho in turn (and doubtless later Vitellius too) fall prey. When Plutarch and Tacitus come to sum up Galba (*Galb.* 29, *Tac. Hist.* 1.49), it is easy – and right – to praise Tacitus for his greater epigrammatic force and bite; but we should also note that his whole emphasis is different, with Tacitus dwelling on those personal strengths and deficiencies that made him 'worthy to be ruler, if only he had not ruled', and Plutarch shifting the emphasis to the way that others took over his rule, men like Vinius and Laco, 'who

put everything up for sale, just as Nero had entrusted himself to men who would never be satisfied'. That elegantly returns to the themes of corruptibility emphasized at the beginning of the *Life*, and we are left with a focus on a thematic continuity across reigns ('just as Nero had') and on the way that others, not the emperor himself, controlled everything that mattered.

Of course personalities mattered too: they matter even in that obituary notice, as it is a point of Galba's personality that, weakened by age as he is, he allowed these other disreputable characters so much power. Personality also matters with Otho, but we can still see that the technique is different from what we will find in the *Parallels*. Take the biggest personality theme of all: the problem posed by Otho's exemplary and noble end and its contrast with his disreputable past life. Was this a matter of character-change? Or was it that people misjudged him, and did not recognize his innate qualities and his true nature – might it even be that great sufferings are precisely what show that true nature at its clearest?³¹ Similar questions can be aired and confronted explicitly in the *Parallel Lives* (*Sert.* 10 with n. 64, *Sull.* 30, and for the notion that sufferings are what best 'reveal' a person's nature, *Nic.* 1); and with Otho as with Antony (*Intro. Ant.*) it might have been possible to draw out points of contact between the warmth and exuberance seen in his excesses and the qualities that made him great. But *Otho* gives us the materials on which such analyses or such discussions might be based; it does not formulate the questions itself.

Collective forces mattered for Tacitus too.³² We can still detect some differences in the ways those forces are treated, most clearly at the moment before the battle of Bedriacum where the two armies paused for a moment – or perhaps they did, for both Tacitus and Plutarch note some uncertainties among their own authorities on what happened – and reflected on what they were doing. Might there even be a possibility of halting it all, and looking for another, better candidate for the empire? Was such an undercurrent the reason why Otho hurried on battle contrary to his strategic interests? Plutarch finds this 'not implausible':

Neither of the men who had been acclaimed emperor enjoyed a good reputation, and the soldiers with the highest quality, experience and sense might well begin to reflect. Such things had been distressing enough long ago, when fellow-citizens inflicted and suffered them for Sulla and Marius, then for Caesar and Pompey: was it not dreadful and peculiarly hateful to put up with them again now, to serve up the empire to fund Vitellius's gluttony and drunkenness or Otho's decadence and excess?

(*Otho* 9)

Tacitus by contrast is scathing.³³ The favoured candidate, so these

stories went, was the Othonian general Suetonius Paulinus.³⁴

I would allow that a few people might in their hearts have prayed for peace rather than conflict and for a good and faultless emperor rather than the vilest of criminals; but I cannot believe that a man of Paulinus's understanding would, in this most degenerate of ages, have hoped for the popular restraint that would have been required to abandon war through affection for peace – that peace which the same people's war-mongering had shattered. Nor would he have thought it possible for armies with different languages and customs to reach such agreement, nor for legates and commanders who were in large part conscious of crimes they had committed through luxury and indigence to allow anyone to be emperor who was not tainted and whom they had not put in their debt.

(Tac. *Hist.* 2.37)

If one thought back to the Republic, it was clear that since the days of Pompey 'every battle had been for the principate'.

The citizen legions had not abandoned their arms at Pharsalia or at Philippi: armies were hardly going to abandon the fight spontaneously for the sake of Otho and Vitellius. The same divine anger, the same human madness, the same reasons for crime were driving them to conflict.

(Tac. *Hist.* 2.38)

So Tacitus's reflections on the change from the Republic are very different from those in Plutarch. It is not that he was incapable of striking Plutarch's tones too: indeed, he had done so himself earlier, when the Roman public reflect on the prospects after Galba's death:

The world had all been destroyed when the contest for primacy was between good men, but the empire had survived with Julius Caesar, had survived with Augustus as victor; the Republic would have survived under Pompey or Brutus; would they now go into temples to pray for Otho or for Vitellius?

(Tac. *Hist.* 1.50)

But these reflections at 2.38 are now Tacitus's own, not those of the public or of the army, and they cast a different and more challenging light on the old Republic, bringing out continuity rather than decline.³⁵ They are in line with those thoughts that Tacitus had reconstructed for Paulinus as well, dismissing any possibility of an outbreak of peace as idle fantasy.

In such a comparison we might write off Plutarch as simply naive, and applaud Tacitus's incisive cynicism. But there may be more to it. Plutarch too was quite capable of reconstructing a viewpoint that was more sombre. He will later do so at *Pompey* 70, when before Pharsalus wise observers reflect on the forces, largely individual ambition and pride, that have brought the Roman empire to such a pass and are

now so hard to resist. A more sceptical, Tacitus-like response to the story might well have occurred to him, and he would have found it tempting: it would after all continue the emphasis on corrupt and venal troops that has been so important in the narrative since *Galba* 1–2.

Yet one can also see why he rejected it, for the rhythm of *Otho* is about to change. Even amid so much carnage, there begins to be a hope of peace, and Otho himself is largely responsible for those hopes through his noble behaviour once the battle is done. That nobility builds on these wistful dreams of peace in several ways. It is partly in tension with it: Otho's concern to avoid further bloodshed and readiness to give up his life suggests that there is more to him than the 'decadence and excess' that now fills the soldiers' minds. The model set by Cato at Utica (*Cato* 55–73) is evoked explicitly by Marius Celsus in ch. 13, and Otho's own fine words in ch. 15 will suggest that the model is not inapposite: so, even more, will the death-scene itself, which has much in common with Cato's. So perhaps, for Plutarch as well as for Tacitus, there are continuities with the Republic as well as contrasts.

Yet Otho's impressive words are more thought-provoking still.

'This day is a happier one for me, comrades, than that first day when you made me emperor: that is what it means to have followers like yourselves, and to be so highly valued. There is one greater prize still, and you must not take it away from me: to die a noble death for so many fine citizens. If I am a worthy emperor of Rome, I must sacrifice my own life for my country. I know that the enemy's victory is not firm or secure: they tell me that our army from Moesia is only a few days' march away, and is already reaching the Adriatic; Asia, Syria, Egypt and the armies fighting Judaea are on our side; the senate is with us; so are our opponents' wives and children. But this is not a war to save Italy against some Hannibal or Pyrrhus or Cimbri; these are Romans fighting Romans, and in victory or defeat alike our country is the victim. Even the victor's gain is our country's loss. You can be sure, and you can often reflect, that I can die more nobly than I can rule. For I cannot see that any victory of mine can achieve as much for Rome as the sacrifice of my life for peace, for concord and to save Italy from ever seeing such a day again.'

(*Otho* 15)

So it is not just the ordinary troops who hankered after peace and felt the contrast with the glory days of the past. It is Otho too ('this is not a war to save Italy against some Hannibal or Pyrrhus or Cimbri').³⁶ And his men respond with all the loyalty that he deserves, even if it had faltered in those moments before the battle: Plutarch tailors his narrative to put weight on the response of that collective body of the troops, who have earlier been so highlighted in their less noble moments.³⁷ As Otho's reign began, some observers had felt that 'it was as if a smile was playing over the face of the empire' (*Otho* 1). That

was premature; but there may, for the moment, seem more brightness as he falls.

Yet that is premature too, and the narrative of *Vitellius* will go on to show it. Far from 'sav[ing] Italy from ever seeing such a day again', these events will lead to a second battle at the very same spot, Bedriacum. For the moment, Otho may still have reason to think that 'Asia, Syria, Egypt and the armies fighting Judaea are on our side', and 'the senate is with us' too. But Vespasian and Mucianus were already moving towards war on their own account, and the senate's loyalty will change as quickly as it had at the end of *Galba* (28). No dawn could be more false. Handling Vespasian's part in the carnage will require an immensely delicate touch in *Vitellius*, even if there may also be some opportunity to represent Otho's hopes as finally achieved through the Flavians, as the world at last is given the calm of which those gloomy armies dreamed.

GALBA

[5? BCE–69 CE]

1. Iphicrates of Athens¹ used to say that it was a good thing for a mercenary soldier to be fond of wealth and fond of enjoyment, for a man who is looking for a way to fund his desires is likely to take more risks in the battle-line. Most people, though, think that an army ought to operate in the same way as the movements of the human body, and not shift under its own impulse but according to the initiative of its general. That is the reason why, so they say, Aemilius Paullus reacted in the way he did when he took over the army in Macedonia when it was full of chatterboxes and busybodies and behaving as if it were itself managing the campaign: ‘Make sure your hand is ready for action and your blade is sharp,’ he said, ‘and leave the rest to me.’² Plato saw that there was no point in having a good leader and general if an army was unsound and disunited, and thought that the virtue of obedience, like that of kingship, required a noble nature and a philosophic training which would concentrate on achieving the correct balance between humane gentleness and spirited vigour.³ There is much in human experience to show that he was right, and particularly the events in Rome after the death of Nero, which demonstrated that nothing is more terrifying than a military force exercising dominant power and driven by uneducated and irrational impulses. Demades⁴ compared the Macedonian army after Alexander’s death to the blinded Cyclops,⁵ with its multiple movements in random and pointless directions; the Roman empire was overtaken by something more like the legendary sufferings and convulsions of the Titans,⁶ torn apart in many directions at once and then collapsing back in on itself. The reason was not so much the appetite for rule of those who were declared emperor, but more the greed and indiscipline of the soldiers, who used one emperor after another to dislodge his predecessor as if they were using one nail to drive out another. There was a man of Pherae⁷ who ruled Thessaly for just ten months and was then immediately killed: he was dubbed ‘the theatrical tyrant’ by Dionysius,⁸ as a joke at the speed of his reverse. Now the hearth of the Caesars, their palace on the Palatine, played host to four successive emperors in a shorter time than that,⁹ with one brought on stage as the last was taken off. The one consolation,

though, in all this misery was that no further action was needed to punish those responsible, but one could see them slaughtered by one another. The first victim, and the one who deserved his punishment most of all, was the man who started the trail of temptation, and schooled men to expect that the fall of a Caesar would bring gains on the scale that he had promised himself. That meant that a glorious deed acquired the basest of names, for the revolt against Nero was turned into treachery by being done for reward.

2. This was Nymphidius Sabinus,¹⁰ who – as I have already mentioned¹¹ – was prefect of the praetorian guard along with Tigellinus.¹² When Nero's cause was altogether hopeless and it was clear that Nero himself was going to try to escape to Egypt,¹³ Nymphidius persuaded the soldiers to declare Galba emperor just as if Nero was no longer there but had already fled. He promised the so-called 'Palace' and 'Praetorian' guard¹⁴ 7,500 drachmas and the troops outside the city 1,250 drachmas apiece.¹⁵ There was no way that sums of this magnitude could be collected without causing far more suffering to humanity than Nero had brought about. It was this that destroyed Nero straight away, then shortly afterwards Galba as well: they abandoned the first emperor in order to get the money and the second when they did not get it. Then they launched a search for someone who would give them so much, but ended by destroying themselves through mutiny and treachery before obtaining what they wanted. A detailed narrative of what happened is appropriate for a pragmatic history, but I too should not omit anything of note in the doings and sufferings of the Caesars.¹⁶

3. Sulpicius Galba was the wealthiest of all the private individuals who entered the house of the Caesars: that much is uncontroversial. The house of the Servii¹⁷ gave him a great claim to nobility, but he prided himself more on the relationship to Catulus,¹⁸ a man who outstripped all his contemporaries in virtue and reputation but willingly allowed others to acquire greater power. Galba also had some family relationship with Augustus's wife Livia,¹⁹ and that was why Livia gave him permission to enter upon his consulship from the Palace.²⁰ He was also a good army commander in Germany,²¹ so they say, and enjoyed an unusually good reputation as proconsul of Africa.²² He had a simple lifestyle, and was thrifty and avoided all extravagance: once emperor, this earned him criticism as a skinflint, which was the form now taken by his fading and outmoded reputation for prudence and good discipline.

He was sent by Nero to govern Spain:²³ Nero had not yet learnt the lesson that citizens with big reputations were to be feared. People anyway thought Galba a mild-mannered character, and his advanced

age²⁴ also encouraged confidence in his caution.

4. In Spain the accursed procurators ran the provinces for him in a way that was ruthless and savage. There was nothing he could do about it, but he did make it clear that he sympathized with the victims and that he was himself being wronged along with them. That in itself afforded some sort of respite and consolation to those who were being condemned and sold into slavery.²⁵ Satirical verses at Nero's expense were also circulating widely and being sung aloud: Galba did nothing to stop this and did not join the procurators in their protests, and this increased his popularity still more.²⁶

By now they had grown used to him, for he was in his eighth year as governor when Julius Vindex, a governor in Gaul, rose against Nero.²⁷ It is said that letters reached him from Vindex some time before the rebellion became open,²⁸ and that Galba neither put his trust in Vindex nor denounced and exposed him in the way that many governors did, sending to Nero the letters they had received and doing what they could to destroy the enterprise – even though they later joined the revolt and made it clear that they were traitors to themselves as much as to Vindex. Then Vindex rose in open war, and wrote to Galba inviting him to accept the position of leader,²⁹ and offer himself to a powerful body that needed a head. By that he meant the countries of Gaul, with their hundred thousand men already in arms and the potential to raise and equip more than as many again. Galba consulted his friends. Some said he should bide his time and wait to see if Rome would react to the revolt positively and energetically; but Titus Vinius, the commander of the general's legion,³⁰ said, 'What sort of deliberation is this, Galba? Asking whether we will stay loyal to Nero is not the behaviour of the loyal.³¹ So assume Nero is already your enemy. In that case you should not abandon the friendship of Vindex – or else you might as well denounce him straight away and declare war on him, for wanting the Romans to have you as their leader³² rather than Nero as their tyrant!'

5. This led Galba to issue an edict stating a day on which he would grant individual requests for freedom.³³ By now there was a good deal of gossip and rumour, and a great many people gathered in eager anticipation of the uprising. No sooner had he appeared on the tribunal than everyone with a single voice hailed him as emperor.³⁴ He did not accept the acclamation straight away, but he did deliver an attack on Nero, listing the most distinguished of his victims and speaking about them with grief,³⁵ and he promised he would dedicate himself to his country, not as a Caesar or as an emperor but under the title of 'general of the senate and people of Rome'. He could demonstrate, too, that Vindex had been sensible and correct to

summon him to be the leader, for Nero's own actions bore witness to that: the emperor had been pretending to despise Vindex and to regard the Gallic threat as negligible, but as soon as he heard about Galba – he was eating a meal at the time following a bath – he knocked over the table at which he was reclining.³⁶ Still, when the senate decreed that Galba was a public enemy Nero wanted to put on a show of confident good humour to his friends, so he said that a very good excuse had now come his way for raising the money he needed: he would make plenty of booty and plunder out of the Gauls once they had been defeated; and Galba's own property was available to him right away to use and to sell, now that the man was an open enemy. So Nero gave orders for the sale of Galba's possessions. When Galba heard of it he immediately put on sale Nero's possessions in Spain, and it was he, not Nero, who found the more enthusiastic buyers.

6. Many people were now defecting from Nero, and nearly all of them supported Galba. The only exceptions were Clodius Macer in Africa³⁷ and Verginius Rufus, the commander of the German army in Gaul,³⁸ both of whom were following a line of their own. Not that their motives were the same. Clodius's record of plunder, slaughter, cruelty and greed meant that he was caught in a position where he could neither defend nor abandon his command. Verginius led the most powerful legions, and they frequently hailed him as emperor himself and tried to force him to accept, but he said that he would neither accept the principate nor allow it to be given to anyone else except a nominee of the senate. From the outset this caused Galba considerable concern; and then the armies of Vindex and Verginius virtually forced their commanders, like charioteers who had lost control of their horses, into a great battle, which ended in the death of twenty thousand Gauls and the suicide of Vindex.³⁹ The word now spread that everyone wanted Verginius to accept the principate after such a success, or else they would revert to supporting Nero if he refused. This thoroughly alarmed Galba, and he wrote to Verginius inviting him into a partnership to protect Rome's empire and freedom. He also returned with his friends to the Spanish city of Clunia,⁴⁰ full of remorse for his actions and nostalgia for his former ingrained habit of avoiding involvement.⁴¹ Time passed, and he took none of the steps that were now necessary.

7. It was already summer, and shortly before dusk there arrived from Rome a freedman called Icelus,⁴² after completing the journey in seven days. He learnt that Galba was resting by himself, and went straight to his bedroom. Galba's house-servants tried to stop him, but he forced his way in and told him the news: at the time when Nero was still alive but was nowhere to be found, first the army and then the people

and senate had proclaimed Galba emperor, and then a little later it had emerged that Nero was dead.⁴³ Not that Icelus had taken this on trust, he said: he had gone to see the body and seen it lying there before he had left.⁴⁴

This report raised Galba to new prominence, and soon a mass of people came running to his door, confident now that they could take his side openly. The speed of it all was unbelievable. Two days later someone else⁴⁵ arrived from the army with some companions, giving a detailed report of the senate's decrees. That man was given a position of honour, while Galba presented Icelus with golden rings,⁴⁶ and under the new name of Marcianus he became the most powerful among the freedmen.⁴⁷

8. Meanwhile, in Rome, Nymphidius Sabinus⁴⁸ was concentrating all power in his own hands, and doing so swiftly and decisively. Galba was an old man, he thought, and would hardly be able to stand the carriage journey to Rome because of his age. (He was a man of seventy-three years.)⁴⁹ The armies in the city had been well disposed to Nymphidius himself for some time and now depended on him alone: so in view of his vast promises they were regarding him as their benefactor, he thought – and Galba as their debtor. He immediately gave his co-prefect Tigellinus⁵⁰ instructions to lay down his sword of office, and played dinner host to the consulars and the magistrates, even adding the name of Galba to the invitations; in the camp he got many soldiers to say that they should send a delegation to Galba and demand that Nymphidius should be appointed sole prefect for life.

The senate passed many decrees giving him honours and power, calling him their benefactor, rushing to pay court at his door every morning and inviting him to initiate and approve every decree. This encouraged him to even greater presumption, and he soon began to frighten as well as offend those who were courting him. The consuls provided public servants to convey to the emperor the decrees and the so-called 'diplomas'⁵¹ under their seal (these carry marks that town magistrates can recognize, so that at a change of horses they can send on the messages with greater urgency): Nymphidius now expressed considerable annoyance that they did not use his own soldiers and send the messages under his own seal. It is said that he even thought of taking action against the consuls, but then dropped the matter when they pleaded with him not to be angry. As a favour to the people, he did not stop the gruesome execution⁵² of any of Nero's men who fell into his hands. They killed the gladiator Spiculus⁵³ by hurling him under the statues of Nero as they were being dragged through the forum; they threw to the ground Aponius, a sycophantic prosecutor,⁵⁴ and drove wagons full of stones over him; and they tore many others

limb from limb, including some who were innocent, so that Mauricus,⁵⁵ a man acknowledged to be of the highest qualities, told the senate that he was afraid they would soon be looking for another Nero.

9. All this brought the position of Nymphidius into closer alignment with his hopes. He did not even object when he was called the son of Gaius Caesar,⁵⁶ the emperor who followed Tiberius. It seems that Gaius had an affair in his youth with Nymphidius's mother, who was a fine-looking woman, the daughter of a servant needlewoman and of the emperor's freedman Callistus.⁵⁷ But the affair with Gaius was probably later than the birth of Nymphidius, and it was often said that he was the son of the gladiator Marcianus and that Nymphidia had fallen for Marcianus because of his celebrity. He was certainly more like Marcianus in physical appearance. Anyway, this person who acknowledged that Nymphidia was his mother was now making out that the overthrow of Nero was all his own doing. He thought that it was not enough reward to have the honours and the wealth and the privilege of sleeping with Sporus, Nero's boy-friend, whom he had summoned from the pyre while the corpse was still burning and now treated as his wife and called Poppaea;⁵⁸ more than this, he now prepared to bid for the principate itself. He took some steps in the city, and for these he made use of his friends, with the secret assistance of certain women and senators; he also sent one of those friends, Gellianus, to Spain to keep an eye on what was happening there.

10. As for Galba, everything after Nero's death was going his way, though the uncertain position of Verginius Rufus certainly gave him cause for thought. Besides commanding a large and extremely effective army, Verginius had also now acquired the prestige of defeating Vindex and bringing under control a great part of the Roman empire, the entire country of Gaul, when it was on the verge of revolt and chaos. There was good reason to fear that he would go along with those who were calling him to the principate, for there was nobody who could match Verginius for fame and reputation, given the influence he had had in freeing Rome both from a cruel tyranny and from a Gallic war. Still, Verginius persisted in his original policy and defended the senate's right to choose the emperor. Even so, he came under repeated popular pressure once Nero's death became known; there was also a scene in his tent, when a military tribune drew his sword and told Verginius to accept either the empire or the blade. Then Fabius Valens,⁵⁹ one of the legionary commanders, took the initiative in swearing allegiance to Galba, and letters arrived from Rome reporting the senate's decisions. At this Verginius persuaded –

though not without great difficulty – his troops to proclaim Galba emperor, and when Galba sent Hordeonius Flaccus to take over his command he accepted it and handed over his forces.⁶⁰ He himself went to meet Galba on his advance towards Rome, then turned round and accompanied him, without receiving any open mark either of anger or of esteem. The explanation for the first lay in Galba's own personal respect for the man; for the second, in the pressure put on Galba by his friends, especially Titus Vinius,⁶¹ who was jealous of Verginius and wanted to clip his wings. What Vinius did not realize was that he was acting exactly as Verginius's guardian angel would have wished, already doing what was necessary to spirit him away from all the wars and troubles that beset the other generals and allowing him a life free of care and an old age full of peace and calm.⁶²

11. The emissaries from the senate met up with Galba near the Gallic city of Narbo,⁶³ and urged him to respond to the desires of the Roman people by appearing quickly in the city. He treated them in a warm and unassuming way in all his meetings and conversations, and that included the style of his dinners. There were plenty of elaborate and regal paraphernalia there for him to use, stuff which Nero had owned and which Nymphidius had now sent to him, but Galba made no use of it and preferred his own. People approved of that, thinking him a man of high principles who was above such vulgar ostentation. Before long, however, Vinius was saying that this noble and unpretentious civility was a sort of demagoguery, a crassness that underrated its own worth: so he persuaded him to make use of Nero's wealth and to spare no regal expense in his entertainment. People could see a broader sense, too, in which the old man was falling more and more under the influence of Vinius.⁶⁴

12. Vinius⁶⁵ was as avaricious as any man alive, and a habitual womanizer too. When he was still a young man, he served his first campaign under the command of Calvisius Sabinus.⁶⁶ The general's wife was a woman of loose morals, and one night Vinius smuggled her into the camp dressed in soldier's uniform, then had sex with her in the general's headquarters – the 'principia', as the Romans put it.⁶⁷ For that the emperor Gaius sent him to prison;⁶⁸ Gaius's death, though, was Vinius's good fortune, and he was set free. Then there was a time when he was at dinner with the emperor Claudius, and he stole a silver goblet.⁶⁹ When Claudius found out what he had done, he invited him back to dinner on the following day, and gave instructions that unlike the other guests he should be given no silver but served everything on earthenware. The emperor's moderation had the effect of turning that scene into a joke, a matter for laughter rather than

indignation. But comedy now turned to tragedy, as his immense power and influence over Galba led him to commit actions for money which became sometimes a cause and sometimes an excuse for great human suffering and catastrophe.

13. It started with Nymphidius. When Gellianus – the man he had sent as a sort of scout to spy on Galba⁷⁰ – returned, Nymphidius gathered that Cornelius Laco⁷¹ had been appointed to command the palace and bodyguard troops,⁷² that Vinius was in total control and that Gellianus himself had been the object of such suspicion and wariness that he had not had any chance to get near Galba or have a private interview with him. That worried Nymphidius greatly, and he gathered the army officers and spoke to them. Galba himself was a reasonable and sensible old person, he said, but he was not at all his own man: he was being dangerously manipulated by Vinius and by Laco. Before those two could acquire the same power as Tigellinus had held, it was time to send the emperor representatives from the camp who would tell him that he would be a far more pleasant and welcome sight to everyone if he abandoned these two – just these two – of his friends. But the officers were not persuaded. It seemed to them strange and ridiculous to treat this elderly emperor as if he were a young man with his first taste of power, and try to call the tune on who should be his friends and who should not. So Nymphidius tried something else. He started to write scaremongering letters to Galba, telling him at one moment that the city was full of festering sores and dangerous instability, at the next that Clodius Macer⁷³ was stopping the grain-ships from sailing from Africa, or that the German legions were on the move again, or that he had heard something similar about the armies in Syria and Judaea.⁷⁴

Galba, though, was not impressed and did not believe him, and so Nymphidius decided to take pre-emptive action. He did this even though Clodius Celsus from Antioch,⁷⁵ a sensible man who was a good and loyal friend, told him that it was a bad idea, because he did not think that a single tenement in Rome would ever hail Nymphidius as Caesar. But most people did not take Clodius seriously, and Mithridates of Pontus⁷⁶ mocked the bald and wrinkled Galba: for the moment the Romans might think of him as a somebody, but as soon as they saw him he would be seen as a disgrace to the days that he had been called Caesar.

14. So the decision was reached to bring Nymphidius into the barracks around midnight and declare him emperor.⁷⁷ But the first military tribune to gather his men that evening was Antonius Honoratus,⁷⁸ and he told them that both he and they had a lot to answer for. They had changed their line so often and so senselessly in so short a time, he

said, and never for the better: it was as if some supernatural force were driving them on from one treachery to the next. Their first tack could be explained by the charges levelled against Nero; but now they were betraying Galba – and why? When had *he* killed his mother or murdered his wife?⁷⁹ What dramatic or tragic performance of *this* emperor were they so ashamed of? ‘Not that those were the reasons that we brought themselves to betray even Nero: no, it was because we believed Nymphidius when he said that Nero had betrayed us first, and taken flight to Egypt.⁸⁰ Are we now to sacrifice Galba on Nero’s tomb? Are we to declare Nymphidia’s son to be Caesar and get rid of the child of Livia’s blood⁸¹ the way we got rid of the child of Agrippina? Or shall we punish the one we’ve got here for the harm he has done, and prove ourselves Nero’s avengers and Galba’s good and faithful protectors?’⁸²

All the soldiers agreed with what the tribune was saying, and they then went up to the others too and called upon them to stay true to their allegiance to the emperor. Most were persuaded. A shout went up: perhaps Nymphidius thought that this meant the soldiers were already calling him – that is what some people say – or perhaps he was eager to grab the moment when they were still in a state of disorder and doubt. He came forward surrounded by bright lights, carrying a speech written by Cingonius Varro⁸³ which he had prepared to give to the soldiers. When he saw that the camp gates were barred and that there were many armed men standing on the walls, he was frightened. He went forward: what were they about, he asked, and who had given them orders to take up their weapons? He was met by one single shout from everyone: Galba was their emperor, and they knew it! Nymphidius came closer, and shouted out his approval and told his followers to do the same. At this the guards at the gates allowed him to come in with a few others. A spear was thrown at him: Septimius stepped in front of him and caught it on his shield; but then many bore down on him with drawn swords. Nymphidius took to his heels, but was chased down and killed in a soldier’s cell. They dragged his corpse into public view, put up some railings around it and left it there for everyone to see when day dawned.

15. Such was the end of Nymphidius. When Galba heard of it, he ordered the execution of those of his fellow-plotters who had not died with him: these included Cingonius the writer of the speech and Mithridates of Pontus.⁸⁴ These were men of some note, and people took the view that their execution without trial was irregular, even if it was just, and was insufficiently respectful of the people: for everyone was expecting a change in the style of the principate, deceived as people so often are by what is said at the outset. They

were even more upset by the order to Petronius Turpilianus, a consular who had stayed loyal to Nero,⁸⁵ to take his own life. Galba also killed Macer in Africa through the agency of Trebonius,⁸⁶ and Fonteius in Germany through Valens,⁸⁷ though in these cases he had the excuse that the men were in control of armed forces and were therefore a threat. But Turpilianus was an old man who was unprotected and unarmed: there was no reason why he should not have been allowed to plead his case, if a man had really been intending to put into practice the moderation that his letters had initially promised.

Those are the grounds for criticizing these actions, but when the approaching Galba arrived within 25 stades of the city⁸⁸ he was met by a rowdy demonstration. The rowers – these were the men whom Nero had recruited to be soldiers and organized into a single unit⁸⁹ – had occupied the road, and pressed around him from all sides. Now that Galba was there, they demanded that he should confirm their status as soldiers, and would not allow those who were greeting the emperor to be seen or heard by him, but crowded round, noisily demanding standards for their legion and a place to live. Galba tried to put them off and told them to approach him later:⁹⁰ they replied that a postponement was tantamount to a refusal, so they kept pace with the carriage, shouting angrily all the while. Some even drew their swords. At this Galba ordered his cavalry to charge them. None of the rowers stood their ground: some were trampled down immediately, others were caught and killed as they fled. It was a bad and unpropitious omen for Galba, entering the city amid so much slaughter and through so many dead bodies. But if anyone before this had thought him negligible, just a weak old man, they now knew that he was someone to inspire terror and fear.

16. He wanted too to signal a transformation from Nero's unreasonable lavishness and extravagance, but here people thought that he overdid it. There was a time when Canus played the flute to him over dinner – Canus was a star performer – and Galba expressed his approval and asked for his cash-box to be brought: he took out a few gold pieces⁹¹ and gave them to Canus, saying that this was from his own pocket, not public money. As for the gifts that Nero had made to theatre people and athletes, he gave instructions that there should be strictly enforced repayment, except for 10 per cent which could be retained.⁹² Money came in slowly and in small amounts, for most of the recipients had spent it all – these were flighty people, after all, living a life of excess. So Galba extended the inquiry to those who had bought or received anything from the recipients, and tried to get the money back from them. It was hard to draw the line, and the business

was spreading wider and wider and involving many people. This did nothing to help Galba's reputation, though the person who really excited jealousy and hatred was Vinius. People said that he was turning the emperor into a mean skinflint as far as everyone else was concerned, but was showing no restraint himself in exploiting, seizing and selling everything. Hesiod's advice is to 'Take your fill when the cask is new, and then when it's nearly gone';⁹³ Vinius saw that Galba was weak and elderly, so took his fill from fortune while he could, thinking that it was beginning and ebbing all at the same time.

17. The old man was indeed a victim more than a wrongdoer,⁹⁴ with Vinius initially taking over things and managing them badly, and then impeding or casting a negative light on any good initiatives of Galba himself. The punishment of Nero's people was a case in point. Galba executed the villains, including Helius, Polyclitus, Petinus and Patrobius.⁹⁵ The people applauded this, and as the men were led through the forum the people cried out that this was a fine parade, one that the gods would love – but that the person that gods and humans would really like was the teacher and tutor of tyranny, Tigellinus.⁹⁶ But that fine figure had already got in first, making sure of Vinius with some immense bribes. So there it was: Turpilianus had met his death, a man who was hated because he did not himself hate an emperor of Nero's stamp nor betray him, but who had not been an accomplice in a single one of Nero's great crimes;⁹⁷ but the man who had turned Nero into someone who deserved to die, then abandoned and betrayed him once he had reached that state, was left alive. It was a great demonstration that nothing was impossible with Vinius, and no hope too great for those who were willing to pay. There was no spectacle that the Roman people had set their hearts on so much as to see Tigellinus led away to punishment; in every theatrical and athletic performance they never stopped demanding it. But now they were cowed by an edict from the emperor,⁹⁸ saying that Tigellinus did not have long to live because of a terminal wasting disease,⁹⁹ and telling the people not to provoke the government or make it more tyrannical. Meanwhile, the two villains were mocking at the people's irritation. Tigellinus made a sacrifice of thanks for his survival and prepared a lavish banquet; Vinius got up from dining with the emperor and went on a drunken carouse to Tigellinus's house, taking with him his own daughter, a widow.¹⁰⁰ Tigellinus toasted her with a gift of 250,000 silver pieces,¹⁰¹ and gave instructions to the chief of his team of concubines to take off the necklace she was wearing, said to be worth 150,000, and put it around the daughter's neck instead.

18. After that even Galba's reasonable actions attracted criticism, for instance the way he treated those who had supported Vindex in Gaul.

For people thought that the concessions – freedom from tribute and grants of citizenship¹⁰² – had not been given out of the emperor's generosity but had been purchased from Vinius. It was this that alienated the ordinary people from the government, while the soldiers were concerned that they were not receiving their bounty. Initially they kept on hoping that, even if they did not get as much as had been promised, Galba would at least match what Nero had given.¹⁰³ But then, on hearing of the complaints, Galba made a remark that was worthy of a great emperor: his practice was to enlist soldiers, he said, not to buy them.¹⁰⁴ Once the soldiers heard of this, they were seized by a violent and intense hatred for him. They thought that he was not merely robbing them himself, but also setting up a precedent and a lesson for future emperors.

Still, in Rome itself the agitation was still below the surface, and there was a certain respect for Galba's presence that blunted and delayed the uprising; there was also no possible source and focus for a change, and that in a way moderated and concealed the degree of resentment. It was a different matter with the troops in Germany who had previously been serving under Verginius and were now under Flaccus. They had a high estimate of their own worth because of their battle with Vindex,¹⁰⁵ but had received nothing: this made them very difficult to command.¹⁰⁶ Flaccus¹⁰⁷ was an invalid, suffering from severe gout, and was inexperienced: they had no regard for him at all. On one occasion the tribunes and captains were making the customary prayers at some show for the good fortune of the emperor Galba: the soldiers responded first with a shout of discontent, then, when the officers persevered with the prayers, let out a cry: 'If he deserves it.'

19. There were several instances of similarly insulting behaviour from the legions under Vitellius,¹⁰⁸ too, and so letters were sent to Galba by his procurators.¹⁰⁹ These alarmed him, and, taking the view that it was not just age but also his childlessness that was causing the disrespect,¹¹⁰ he began to think about adopting some young man from a noble family and declaring him the heir to the empire.

There was a man called Marcus Otho.¹¹¹ His family was quite prominent, but it was the hedonistic life of degenerate excess that he had lived since his youth which really marked him out among the Romans. Homer often calls Paris 'the husband of fair-tressed Helen',¹¹² dignifying him with his wife's name to give the impression that he had no other claim to repute; in the same way Otho became famous at Rome because of his marriage to Poppaea.¹¹³ Nero fell in love with Poppaea while she was married to Crispinus,¹¹⁴ but at that time he was still treating his own wife with some respect and he was also nervous of his mother,¹¹⁵ and so he set up Otho to make a play for

Poppaea.¹¹⁶ He was a good friend of Otho because of their shared taste for high living, and he enjoyed the way that Otho would tease him for being mean and ungenerous. A story is told of a time when Nero was anointing himself with expensive perfume and splashed some onto Otho: the next day Otho invited him back, and suddenly released silver and gold pipes from all directions which poured out perfume like water and drenched everyone. Otho duly seduced Poppaea in preparation for Nero, and won her over with hopes of the emperor himself: so she left her husband. Once she had come to Otho as his wife, he began to be discontented: having a share in her was not enough, it was giving a share that was the trouble. Nor was Poppaea displeased, so they say, to see all this jealousy. It is said, anyway, that she barred the door to Nero at a time when Otho was away;¹¹⁷ perhaps she was spicing up the affair by playing hard to get, perhaps (as some claim) she did not like the idea of marrying the emperor but, given her sexual appetite, did not at all mind having him as a lover. This put Otho's life in danger, and it was certainly curious that Nero killed the woman who was his own wife and sister¹¹⁸ for the sake of marrying Poppaea, but left Otho alive.

20. Seneca was a supporter of Otho,¹¹⁹ and it was on his urging and advice that Nero sent him out to the Ocean, to govern Lusitania.¹²⁰ There he treated the subject-peoples in a way they found pleasing and inoffensive:¹²¹ he knew that the post had been given him as a way of sweetening and masking his banishment.

When Galba revolted, Otho was the first of the governors to join him, and he brought with him all the silver and gold that he possessed in the form of drinking cups and tableware, and gave it to Galba to melt down for coinage. He also gave him those of his servants who had been trained to provide skilled service at table. In other ways too he was loyal, and when given the chance to show his mettle he proved himself as shrewd and practical as anyone; and during his whole journey he accompanied Galba for day after day, riding with him in the same carriage. While they were travelling together he courted Vinus too with attentiveness and with gifts: just as he yielded the first place to him, so it was thanks to Vinus that he was in firm possession of the position of influence next after him.¹²² He outdid Vinus, though, in the way he avoided arousing jealousy: he helped petitioners without any reward, and he behaved in an approachable and civil way to everyone. He was particularly helpful to soldiers, and advanced many to positions of leadership, in some cases by asking Galba directly and in others by acting through Vinus and the freedmen Icelus and Asiaticus,¹²³ for they were the most influential people at court. Whenever Otho entertained Galba to dinner, he gave

a bribe to the company who was acting as the emperor's bodyguard,¹²⁴ one gold piece for each man.¹²⁵ On the face of it this was a mark of honour to Galba; in fact, it was a skilful and calculated stratagem to win over the military.

21. So, when Galba was deliberating on the choice of an heir, Vinius brought forward Otho. Not even that was done for nothing, as the deal included marriage with his daughter¹²⁶ once Galba had adopted Otho and announced him as his successor. But Galba, it was always clear, placed the interests of the state above his own, and now people could see that he preferred to choose the man who would be best for the state rather than a favourite of his own. Not that it is likely that he would have picked Otho even to be his private heir, knowing how loose-living and extravagant he was, and realizing that he was deep in debt to the tune of 50 million.¹²⁷ So he listened to Vinius silently and patiently, and put off his decision. He declared himself and Vinius consuls,¹²⁸ and was expected to announce his successor at the beginning of the year. The military would have been more delighted to see Otho named than anyone else.

22. Then, as Galba was still hesitating and making up his mind, he was overtaken by the outbreak of trouble in Germany. All the soldiers hated Galba because of his failure to give them the bounty, but the German legions had their own particular justifications for action. There was the disrespectful dismissal of Verginius Rufus;¹²⁹ there was also the way that the Gauls they had fought were getting rewards, while those who had not supported Vindex were being punished.¹³⁰ Why, it was Vindex alone to whom Galba was showing any gratitude, giving him honour now he was dead and revering him with public sacrifices as the one who had made him emperor of Rome!

That was the talk in the camp¹³¹ as the first day of the year arrived, the Kalends of January as they call it. Flaccus¹³² called on them to take the customary oath to the emperor, but instead they went up to Galba's statues and overturned and dragged them to the ground, then took the oath in the name of the senate and people of Rome before breaking up. This started the officer-class thinking seriously about the dangers of anarchy as a form of revolt. 'What is the matter with us, my fellow-soldiers?' one of them asked.¹³³ 'What are we doing, neither making a new person emperor nor protecting the one we have already? It is as if we're not trying to get away from Galba, but from any ruler and any form of obedience. We can ignore Flaccus: he's just Galba's shadow and cipher. But Vitellius, the commander of the other Germany,¹³⁴ is just one day's journey away.¹³⁵ His father was censor, three times consul and more or less Claudius's co-ruler.¹³⁶ As for Vitellius himself, some people scoff at his poverty,¹³⁷ but it can serve

as a clear badge of the goodness and big-heartedness of the man. Come on: let's pick him, and show all the world that we are better at choosing an emperor than any Spaniard or Lusitanian!

Some agreed and some did not. But then a single standard-bearer slipped out and reported this to Vitellius, arriving at night and finding him at dinner with many guests. Word quickly spread among his troops, and Fabius Valens,¹³⁸ a legionary commander, rode in the next day with many horsemen and was the first to salute Vitellius as emperor. During the days before this Vitellius had given the impression of declining and refusing, nervous of the greatness of the empire: but now, heated with wine and full of his midday food, he came out, so they say, and did not object when they hailed him as 'Germanicus', though he would not accept the name of 'Caesar'.¹³⁹ Flaccus's army too immediately abandoned that fine Republican oath to the senate, and swore that they would obey the orders of the emperor Vitellius.

23. That is how Vitellius was proclaimed emperor in Germany. On hearing of the uprising there¹⁴⁰ Galba delayed the adoption no further. He knew that some of his friends were canvassing for Dolabella¹⁴¹ and most of them for Otho, but he did not rate either man highly himself. So, without saying a word in public, he suddenly sent for Piso, son of Crassus and Scribonia.¹⁴² (Both parents had been killed by Nero.) Piso was a young man of the best possible moral stamp: quiet, orderly behaviour and asceticism were his most prominent characteristics.¹⁴³ Now Galba began the journey down to the camp to declare him Caesar and successor.¹⁴⁴ As soon as he left the palace there were some ominous signs in the sky, and once he began to make his speech – some parts of it he read from a script – there was such persistent thunder and lightning and such torrential rain and darkness in the city and camp that it was evident that Heaven was not accepting or approving the adoption as in the state's interest. The soldiers too were in a sore and sullen state, as even now they were offered no donative.

Eyewitnesses were amazed at Piso, as they could tell from his voice and his expression that he was receiving this massive sign of favour without being overwhelmed by it, though certainly not without emotion.¹⁴⁵ Otho's appearance, too, told its tale. It was clear that he was taking the disappointment badly and angrily: now that he had begun to be seen as a worthy candidate and had come so close to his prize, he took his failure to achieve it as a mark of Galba's hatred and hostility. That made him nervous for the future as well. He feared Piso; he blamed Galba; he was furious with Vinus; and he stalked off brimful of different emotions.¹⁴⁶ But his coterie of soothsayers and Chaldaeans¹⁴⁷ would not let him abandon his hopes or give up

altogether, particularly Ptolemaeus,¹⁴⁸ who took confidence from his frequent prediction that Nero would not kill Otho but would die before him, and Otho would survive and become ruler of Rome. He had been right about the first part: now it would be wrong to despair of the second. Others too felt and expressed their secret sympathy for Otho, telling him he had been treated very badly. These included a large number of the cronies of Tigellinus and Nymphidius who had been thrown out in humiliation from their positions of influence, and now came flooding sycophantically over to Otho's side, echoing his complaints and urging him on to action.

24. Among these were Veturius and Barbius. One was an *optio* and the other a *tesserarius*, as the Romans call those serving as messengers and scouts.¹⁴⁹ They were joined by Onomastus, a freedman of Otho, who went round bribing some men with silver and others with promises. But the men were already rotten, and just wanted an excuse. Four days would never have been enough to win over a healthy army so completely, for that was the entire interval between the adoption and the murder: it was on the sixth day that they were killed, in Roman dating the eighteenth before the Kalends of February.¹⁵⁰

On the early morning of that day Galba sacrificed on the Palatine in the presence of his friends.¹⁵¹ The officiating priest was Umbricius, and as soon as he took the entrails into his hands and inspected them he said, without any equivocation or ambiguity, that he saw the signs of a great disturbance and a treacherous danger¹⁵² hanging over the emperor's head. And Otho was just there, just behind Galba, listening to what Umbricius was saying and revealing: Heaven was virtually handing him over red-handed.

Otho was certainly shaken, and his skin was changing to all sorts of colours in his terror. But now Onomastus the freedman came up and reported that the builders had arrived and were waiting for him at his home. That was the agreed signal that the time had come for Otho to meet up with the soldiers. So he said that he had just bought an old house and wanted to show the vendors some parts that were rotten, and took his departure. He went down through the house of Tiberius,¹⁵³ as it is called, and made his way to the place in the forum where a golden column marks the point where all the roads through Italy terminate.¹⁵⁴

25. Here, so they say, those who first greeted Otho and hailed him as emperor numbered no more than twenty-three.¹⁵⁵ True, he was not as mentally enfeebled as his luxurious and effeminate lifestyle might suggest, but was vigorous and resolute when danger threatened; but still his nerve was shaken, and it was his companions who insisted on pressing on, surrounding his carriage with drawn swords and insisting

that the bearers take it up. Otho himself kept muttering that it was all a lost cause, and urging the bearers to hurry (a few bystanders could hear what he said, and they were more surprised than alarmed by the small number who were prepared to take such a risk). As his carriage made its way through the forum he was met by about the same number again, then others linked up with them in groups of three or four; soon everyone turned to join the procession, hailing Otho as Caesar and brandishing their naked swords.

Martialis was the military tribune in charge of the camp-watch, and he let them pass: they say that he was not a conspirator himself,¹⁵⁶ but was shaken and intimidated by the suddenness of what was happening. Once Otho was inside, there was no resistance. The plotters carefully took up their positions so as to hem in those who were scattered around in ones and twos and were not yet in the know, and this latter group soon joined them, initially in fear and then in the belief that it was for the best.

News swiftly reached Galba on the Palatine. The sacrificing priest was still there with the entrails in his hands, so that even the most rigidly sceptical were shaken and amazed by this divine involvement. Then a crowd of all sorts of people came flooding in from the forum. Vinius and Laco and some of the freedmen stood protecting Galba with drawn swords, while Piso went to speak to the bodyguards on duty at the palace.¹⁵⁷ The Illyrian legion was quartered at the time in the Vipsanian Portico, and Marius Celsus,¹⁵⁸ a reliable man, was sent off to make sure of them before the rioters could get there.

26. Galba's first instinct was to go out. Vinius said he should not, Celsus and Laco said he should,¹⁵⁹ and attacked Vinius sharply for saying what he did. Then a strong rumour started spreading to the effect that Otho had been killed in the camp. A little later Julius Atticus¹⁶⁰ was sighted, a man who was among the best known of the bodyguard: now he was seen rushing up with drawn sword, shouting out that he had killed the enemy of Caesar.¹⁶¹ He pushed his way through the people in front of him and showed Galba his bloodstained sword. Galba looked hard at him: 'Who gave the order?' he asked. The man spoke of his loyalty and the oath of allegiance he had sworn, and the crowd shouted out their approval and applauded.¹⁶²

Galba now got into his carriage and began his journey, intending to sacrifice to Jupiter and make an appearance before the citizens. As he reached the forum, it was as if there was a change of wind: he was now met by a rumour that Otho was in control of the camp. A crowd of that size behaved as one would expect, some telling him to go back and some to go forward, some encouraging him and some telling him not to believe what he heard, and the carriage was bounced around in

all directions as if it were on a stormy sea,¹⁶³ often tipping towards the ground. Soon there appeared first horsemen and then foot-soldiers bearing down upon them through the Basilica of Paulus,¹⁶⁴ all shouting the same thing: 'Make way, private citizen!' ¹⁶⁵

Ordinary people were running everywhere, not scattering in flight, but making for the porticos and the elevated parts of the forum. It was as if they were looking for good spots to watch the show.¹⁶⁶ Now Atilius Vercilio¹⁶⁷ dashed a statue of Galba to the ground, and the troops took this as a signal to start the fighting and pelt the carriage with javelins. They missed, but now advanced on it with drawn swords. No one offered any resistance or defence except for one man, the only individual among so many tens of thousands on whom the sun looked that day¹⁶⁸ to be worthy of the Roman empire. This was Sempronius Densus, a centurion, who did not owe Galba any personal favour but was standing up for the good and the law. Now he took his stance in front of the carriage.¹⁶⁹ First he held up the rod which centurions use for striking miscreants: 'Spare the emperor,' he cried to the attackers. They closed on him, and he drew his sword and fought for a long time until his hamstrings were cut and he sank to the ground.

27. Galba's carriage was overturned and he toppled out close to the place called the Lacus Curtius.¹⁷⁰ The soldiers rushed up and started belabouring him. He was wearing a breastplate, but now he bared his throat: 'Do it,' he said, 'if that is what is best for the people of Rome.'¹⁷¹ He took many blows on his legs and arms, but the death-blow, so most people say, was delivered by a certain Camurius of the fifteenth legion. Others give the name as Terentius or Lecanius or Fabius Fabullus.¹⁷² He¹⁷³ cut off his head, so they say, and scooped it up in his cloak because the baldness made it difficult to grab; his companions would not let him keep it concealed but told him to make his brave deed visible to everyone, and so he fixed it on to the point of a spear and brandished it aloft – this face of an old man, a good ruler and pontifex and consul. Now he went running with it in the way that bacchants do,¹⁷⁴ often reeling around and waving the spear as the blood ran down it.

When the head was brought to him, they say that Otho cried out, 'This is nothing, my fellow-soldiers: show me the head of Piso!' And it was soon brought in. The young man had been wounded and had tried to escape, but was hunted down and killed by a certain Murcus near the Temple of Vesta.¹⁷⁵ Vinius too was cut down, even though he made it clear that he had been involved in the conspiracy against Galba, shouting out that he was being killed contrary to Otho's wishes.¹⁷⁶ Still, they cut off his head too and also Laco's,¹⁷⁷ then took

them to Otho and demanded their rewards. As Archilochus puts it:¹⁷⁸

We caught up with seven: they lie there, slain;
We slayers number a thousand.

And it was just the same then. Many who had no share in the killing smeared their hands and swords with blood, and came showing them off and pressing notes on Otho to demand their rewards. At any rate, there were 120 people identified later on the basis of these written notes, and Vitellius had them all hunted down and executed.¹⁷⁹ Marius Celsus came to the camp too, and many denounced him for calling on the soldiers to help Galba:¹⁸⁰ the crowd roared out demands for his death. Otho did not want this, but was nervous of opposing it, and he said that he was not going to kill him so quickly: he wanted to get some information from him first. Then he gave instructions that he should be kept under guard in prison, and handed him over to men he could particularly trust.

28. A senate was now summoned. It was as if they were different men completely,¹⁸¹ or there were new gods in Heaven:¹⁸² now the senators gathered and swore the oath to Otho, the oath that Otho himself had taken and betrayed, and they proclaimed him Caesar and Augustus while the headless corpses were still lying there scattered in the forum in their consular dress.

They had no more use for the heads, so they sold Vinus's to his daughter for 2,500 drachmas;¹⁸³ Piso's was given to his wife Verania¹⁸⁴ when she asked for it, and they gave Galba's to the slaves of Patrobius and Tigellinus.¹⁸⁵ They took it and inflicted all sorts of disfigurement and humiliation on it, then threw it down at the spot where they execute people on the emperor's orders: it is called Sessorium.¹⁸⁶ Helvidius Priscus took up Galba's body, with Otho's permission, and a freedman called Argius¹⁸⁷ gave it night-time burial.

29. That completes the story of Galba. Few Romans could match him in birth or wealth, and through that birth and wealth he became pre-eminent among his contemporaries. He lived through the reigns of five emperors with honour and respect, so that it was his reputation rather than his power that allowed him to defeat Nero. Of the others who played a part in that emperor's overthrow, some were not regarded by anyone as worthy of rule, while others were not so regarded by themselves.¹⁸⁸ Galba was saluted as emperor and accepted; he lent his name to the daring of Vindex, and that revolt – initially called 'disruption' or an 'attempt at revolution' – he turned into a civil war by giving it a leader of imperial calibre. So he took the view that he was not seizing his moment for power, but lending

himself to what the moment required. He aspired to take the people who had been spoilt by Tigellinus and Nymphidius and rule them in the manner that Scipio, Fabricius and Camillus¹⁸⁹ had ruled the Romans of their own day. Old age bore heavily on him, but as long as arms and fighting were required he showed himself a commander of unqualified old-time qualities. Then he put himself in the hands of Vinius, Laco and the freedmen, men who put everything up for sale, just as Nero had entrusted himself to men who would never be satisfied. So Galba left no one to miss his rule, but many to pity his death.¹⁹⁰

OTHO

[32–69 CE]

1. The next day dawned,¹ and the new emperor came out to the Capitol and sacrificed. Then he gave orders that Marius Celsus² should be brought before him. When he arrived, Otho greeted him and spoke to him warmly, urging him to forget the charge brought against him rather than remember his release. Celsus's answer showed a certain nobility and sensitivity, for he said that the accusation itself served as testimony to his loyalty: he had been charged with staying true to Galba, a man to whom he owed nothing. Those present were delighted with both Otho and Celsus, and the soldiers too approved. Then Otho delivered a speech to the senate full of generous and popular sentiments:³ he transferred to Verginius Rufus a portion of the consulship which he was due to hold himself, and confirmed all the consulships assigned by Nero and Galba;⁴ priesthoods were awarded according to seniority, or to men held in particular respect. As for the senators who had returned from exile under Galba, he restored to all of them such of their possessions as he found unsold. Up to that point the most prominent and influential citizens had been shuddering: it was as if no human being but some fury of punishment or spirit of revenge had burst upon affairs; but now their hopes turned to new cheer, and it was as if a smile was playing over the face of the empire.⁵

2. Still, nothing brought more delight to the Romans as a whole, and nothing won them over more firmly to Otho's side, than the fate of Tigellinus.⁶ No one had realized it, but the fear of punishment, which the city demanded as its public due, had already been one sort of punishment in itself; a second sort had been the incurable diseases that racked his body; but the wisest judges put particular weight on those impious and unspeakable cavortings with prostitutes, a style of life to which his depraved taste clung even as it came near to gasping its last. This, thought those wise persons, was the worst punishment of all, outweighing a multitude of deaths. Still, the ordinary people found it offensive that he should still be alive and seeing the light of day, the light now denied to so many fine people who were dead through his work. So Otho sent a man to his estate at Sinoessa to get him.⁷ That

was where Tigellinus was staying, with ships moored nearby to make it possible to escape even further from danger. When the man arrived, Tigellinus tried to bribe him with a vast sum of gold. The man refused. Tigellinus still pressed the gifts upon him and asked him to wait a moment, to give him time to shave. He then took the razor, and he slit his own throat.

3. In this way Otho gave the people the most merited of pleasures; at the same time he showed no personal vindictiveness against anyone.⁸ As a gesture to the people, he at first made no objection to being hailed in the theatres with Nero's name, and he did not prevent it when a few people made a public display of Nero's statues. Cluvius Rufus adds that 'diplomas' (the documents they send with the couriers) were sent to Spain with 'Nero' as an additional name appended to 'Otho'.⁹ But when Otho saw that the most prominent and influential people¹⁰ were offended by this, he stopped the practice.

That was the shape that his government was beginning to take. But the mercenaries¹¹ were being difficult, urging him to distrust the most respectable citizens: these, they said, were the people to guard against, these the wings to clip. Perhaps they were genuinely afraid of them and acting through true concern for Otho; perhaps this was merely a pretext for sowing confusion and breeding war. There was one occasion when Otho had sent Crispinus¹² to bring the seventeenth cohort from Ostia.¹³ It was still night-time, and Crispinus was getting ready and loading the wagon with the weapons. Then there came a shout from the boldest of the soldiers. Crispinus was up to no good, they cried; the senate was going to revolt; these weapons were not to be used for Caesar but against Caesar.¹⁴ Many were impressed and stirred by what they heard; some grabbed the weapons, others killed two centurions who resisted, together with Crispinus himself; and everyone joined in making their preparations and urging one another on to come to Caesar's aid. Thus they drove into Rome. When they arrived they heard that he was giving a dinner for eighty senators. They rushed on the palace: now was the time, they said, to catch all of Caesar's enemies together and kill them. The city was full of confused terror, with everyone thinking that it was immediately going to be plundered; in the palace people were running everywhere; Otho had no idea at all of what to do. He was fearful for his guests, they were fearful of him.¹⁵ He could see them watching him intently, speechless and terrified, many of them with their wives there as fellow-guests. He sent his commanders¹⁶ out to talk to the troops and try to calm them, and at the same time he asked his guests to leave by another door. They got out just in time, as the mercenaries forced their way into the dining-hall: what has happened to Caesar's enemies, they cried. Otho's

immediate response was to stand up there on his couch and give an elaborate speech of reassurance and entreaty, even breaking into tears,¹⁷ and with great difficulty he persuaded them to leave. Then, on the next day, he gave each of them an individual gift of 1,250 drachmas¹⁸ and went into the camp. He appreciated the enthusiastic support, he said, which the mass of the soldiers had showed; there were just a few who were plotting against him, blackening the emperor's moderation and their own sense of discipline. It was now up to them to share his sense of outrage and join him in punishing them.¹⁹ They all shouted out their approval and urged him to do as he proposed. He took just two men, the sort that no one would mind seeing punished, and left.

4. Different people responded to this episode in different ways. Some were admiring, those who were already satisfied with Otho and believed in his transformation. Others put it down to political necessity, with Otho having to play the demagogue for the sake of the war. For firm news was already coming in that Vitellius had assumed the position and power of an emperor, and express couriers kept arriving with news of some fresh Vitellian gain; though others also reported that the legions of Pannonia, Dalmatia and Moesia had declared for Otho, together with their generals. Soon there came friendly letters from Mucianus and from Vespasian, both of them in command of great forces, the one in Syria and the other in Judaea.²⁰ All this encouraged Otho to write to Vitellius.²¹ He urged him towards peace; if he agreed, then Otho would give him vast sums of money and a city where he could live undisturbed a life of consummate ease and leisure. Vitellius replied, at first in terms of gentle dissimulation. But then the two men gradually became more and more provoked, and their letters were full of mutual accusations of outrage and vice. It was not that the charges were untrue, but it was senseless and ridiculous for one to accuse the other of faults which were common to both. Decadence, effeminacy, military inexperience, an abundance of earlier debts contracted in penury – here it was hard to say which of the two outdid the other.

Reports kept coming in of omens and apparitions. Many of them were rumours, of uncertain origin and value; but everyone saw what happened to the statue of Victory on the Capitol, when the reins slipped from her hands as if she had lost control of her chariot. Equally public was the way in which the statue of Julius Caesar on the island in mid river turned from west to east, even though there had been no earthquake or blast of wind. They say that this happened just as Vespasian was turning to open intervention.²² Another omen that worried the ordinary people was the strange behaviour of the Tiber. It

was the season when rivers are particularly full, but still it had never been so high or so destructive before. It broke its banks and flooded a large part of the city, especially the grain-market, with the result that the city suffered a terrible scarcity for many days.

5. News now came in that Vitellius's generals Caecina and Valens were already holding the Alps;²³ meanwhile, in Rome a nobleman, Dolabella, gave the mercenaries cause to suspect him of plotting rebellion.²⁴ It may have been Dolabella himself whom Otho feared, it may have been someone else; in any case, Otho removed him to the city of Aquinum,²⁵ adding some words of encouragement.

Then Otho turned to selecting the magistrates who were to accompany his journey, and he included Vitellius's brother Lucius, without adjusting in either direction the honour in which he was held. He paid particular attention to protecting Vitellius's mother and wife, ensuring that they felt no fear for themselves. As prefect of Rome he installed Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian;²⁶ possibly this was a further way of honouring Nero's memory, for Sabinus had been appointed to the post by him and discharged by Galba; possibly this promotion of his brother was more aimed at Vespasian as a gesture of goodwill and confidence.

Otho himself remained behind at Brixillum,²⁷ an Italian city on the Po, while he sent forward Marius Celsus and Suetonius Paulinus in command of his troops, accompanied by Gallus and Spurrinna.²⁸ These were all distinguished men, but they were unable to conduct the campaign as they wished. The explanation lay in the indiscipline and the audacity of the troops, who thought themselves above taking orders from anyone. Did not the emperor himself owe his rule to them?

These same factors were in play on the enemy's side, and there too the commanders were finding things unhealthy and intractable, with everything intimidating and overblown. Still, their army at least had experience of fighting, and they did not shun the hard work because they were used to it, whereas inactivity had softened up Otho's force: these had enjoyed a lifestyle that was so unwarlike, with most of their time spent in theatres and festivals and plays. Not that there was any shortage of arrogance and boastfulness: if they were reluctant to perform the duties expected of them, it was because they thought themselves too grand rather than too feeble. Spurrinna tried to use force, and they all but killed him; they piled on him all manner of arrogance and abuse – he was a traitor, they said, sabotaging all Caesar's opportunities and interests.²⁹ Some even drunkenly came to his tent after nightfall, demanding their travel expenses; they had to go, they said, to denounce him to Caesar.

6. What came to the immediate rescue of Spurrinna and of Otho's cause was a soldiers' slanging match at Placentia.³⁰ Vitellius's men were attacking the walls, and they hurled abuse at Otho's troops as they stood there on the battlements: 'You and your theatres and your dances and your goggling at the Pythian and Olympian games! But there's something you've never known or seen, and that's fighting or war. Doesn't it make you proud to have chopped the head off a defenceless old man?' (They meant Galba.) 'But you would never go down openly to take on and fight real men.'³¹ All this so infuriated and inflamed them that they fell on their knees before Spurrinna, begging him to make use of them and give his orders: there was no risk and no hard work that was too great. The battle around the walls became very fierce, and the siege-engines rolled up; but Spurrinna's force won, and they forced back the enemy amid great carnage. Thus they saved a famous city, as fine as any in Italy.

In other ways, too, Otho's generals were less of a burden to the cities and individuals they encountered than their Vitellian counterparts.³² On Vitellius's side there was also Caecina. There was nothing of the common touch about the way he looked or talked; he was a hateful, outlandish figure, with his vast bulk, his Gallic trousers and long sleeves, and his habit of using signs rather than words even to Roman officials.³³ His wife³⁴ too had an escort of picked cavalry, as she rode on horseback in all her finery. Their other general was Fabius Valens, a man whose avarice was unsated by all he had plundered from the enemy or stolen or taken as bribes from the allies; indeed, this was thought to be one of the reasons why his march was so slow and he was late for the first battle.³⁵ Others put the blame on Caecina's eagerness to win the victory for himself before Valens could arrive; a series of lesser errors then led to his joining battle in an ill-timed and dishonourable way – a battle which all but destroyed their whole cause.

7. This is how it happened. Forced back from Placentia, Caecina made for Cremona, another large and prosperous city. The first to face him was Annius Gallus,³⁶ who had been on his way to reinforce Spurrinna at Placentia. He was still on the march when he heard that Placentia was safe but Cremona was now in danger, and so he changed course, moved his army there and pitched camp close to the enemy.³⁷ Then the other generals came one by one to his aid. Caecina had laid an ambush, sending a large force of heavy infantry into some rough and wooded ground. He then gave orders to the cavalry to ride out ahead; if the enemy engaged them, they were gradually to retreat and withdraw, until this backward movement had enticed the enemy into the ambush.³⁸ But news of this came to Celsus from deserters. He

responded by using good cavalry to counter the attack, but pursuing very carefully, then surrounding the ambush and driving them into confusion, and finally calling his own legionaries from the camp. If only they had arrived promptly, it seems likely that they could have built on the cavalry success and wiped out Caecina's force to the last man; but Paulinus was late and slow in arriving,³⁹ and he was later criticized for showing a caution that was excessive and unworthy of his past reputation.⁴⁰ Most of the soldiers threw in charges of treachery as well, and they tried to stir Otho into taking action: the victory was as good as theirs, they boasted, but it had not been carried through thanks to the cowardice of the generals. It was not so much that Otho believed them, more that he was afraid to give the impression of disbelief. So he sent his brother Titianus to the armies, together with the prefect Proculus;⁴¹ Proculus really controlled everything, though Titianus was nominally in command.⁴² As for Celsus and Paulinus, they just had empty titles, 'advisers' and 'friends'; they had no authority or power in reality.

The enemy too faced similar disturbances, especially in the army of Valens.⁴³ When they heard of the battle at the ambush, they were furious that they had not been there and had been unable to help when so many had died. They were on the point of stoning Valens, but he just managed to persuade them and win them over. Then he struck camp and joined Caecina's force.

8. Otho now arrived at the camp at Bedriacum, which is a small town close to Cremona, and there was a council of war.⁴⁴ Proculus and Titianus pointed to the troops' enthusiasm, with victory fresh in their minds. Now was the time to strike decisively, not to sit around waiting: their army would never be stronger, and they should not blunt this keenness, nor give Vitellius time to arrive in person from Gaul. Paulinus took the opposite view. The enemy had all they needed for battle, he said, and they lacked nothing; but Otho was expecting another force from Moesia and Pannonia,⁴⁵ one which was just as large as the one he had here. He should wait for the moment which suited him, not play the enemy's game. The army was not going to be blunted by waiting, given that they were enthusiastic enough even with the lesser resources they had already; if they were reinforced by more combatants, they would certainly outmatch the enemy. Anyway, any delay would be in their interests, for they had an abundance of supplies; time would rob the enemy even of necessities, encamped as they were in hostile country. Marius Celsus supported Paulinus. Annius Gallus was not there – he was receiving treatment for a fall from his horse – but Otho wrote to him, and his advice was not to hurry but to wait for the army from Moesia, which was already on its

way. Still, Otho was not persuaded, and those urging battle carried the day.

9. Different authorities offer different explanations for this. One reason was particularly clear, and this related to the so-called ‘praetorians’, who served as the emperor’s guards but were now getting a taste of some real campaigning instead.⁴⁶ Their existence in Rome had been full of festivals and free from warfare, and they were missing it; now they were impossible to restrain in their eagerness to fight, convinced that a single charge would overwhelm the enemy. It would appear that Otho himself was also losing his capacity to endure the uncertainty, and his inexperience and irresolution were making it impossible for him to think clearly about the dangers ahead. His worries were wearing him down; he was like a man who wants to cover his face and hurl his cause from some cliff-top for fortune to take as it will.

That is the version given by the orator Secundus,⁴⁷ who was Otho’s secretary; but there were others who were saying that there was considerable pressure in the two armies for the forces to confer, and to agree if they could on the best man from among their current commanders; or, if not, to convene the senate and entrust it with the choice of an emperor.⁴⁸ That is not implausible. Neither of the men who had been acclaimed emperor enjoyed a good reputation, and the soldiers with the highest quality, experience and sense might well begin to reflect.⁴⁹ Such things had been distressing enough long ago, when fellow-citizens inflicted and suffered them for Sulla and Marius, then for Caesar and Pompey: was it not dreadful and peculiarly hateful to put up with them again now, to serve up the empire to fund Vitellius’s gluttony and drunkenness or Otho’s decadence and excess?

⁵⁰ That is why people suspect that Celsus and his supporters encouraged delay, aware of this mood and hoping that a decision might be reached without fighting or suffering; and this, they think, is what Otho and his men were fearing when they hurried on the battle.

10. Otho himself returned to Brixillum.⁵¹ This was another mistake. It was not just that his presence might have inspired the combatants to feel more shame at failure and ambition for success; he also took away with him the toughest and keenest of his infantry and cavalry to serve as his bodyguard, and this was like cutting off his own spearhead.⁵²

Another battle took place around the same time, in the region of the Po. Caecina was trying to force a crossing,⁵³ Otho’s troops were resisting in strength. They were making little headway, and finally they crammed some ships with torchwood full of sulphur and pitch; but then a river breeze caught hold of this material they had prepared for use against the enemy, and fanned the flames. First came smoke,

then a violent blaze. They panicked, leapt into the river, upset their boats and fell into the hands of the jeering enemy. The Germans also fought against Otho's gladiators on an island in mid river, beat them and killed a fair number.

11. After all this Otho's men at Bedriacum were furious and eager for battle. Proculus led them out from Bedriacum, then pitched camp after a march of 50 stades.⁵⁴ But he did this with such ridiculous incompetence that in spring-time, with the surrounding plains full of streams and rivers that never dried, he still suffered from a water shortage.

The next day he wanted to advance against the enemy for a distance of at least 100 stades, but Paulinus objected.⁵⁵ He thought that they should wait and not wear themselves out before the battle, nor move directly from a march into combat against men who were fully armed and would have plenty of time to get into battle-line, while the Othonians were making so long a march with all their cattle and camp-followers. The generals were arguing about this when a horseman from Otho rode up, one of the so-called 'Numidians'.⁵⁶ He brought a written order not to wait or delay, but to march at once against the enemy. They consequently broke camp and advanced.

The news of this march alarmed Caecina. He quickly left his operations and the river, and came to the camp. There, most of the army was already armed, and Valens was telling them the password; while the legions were casting lots for their positions, they sent their best cavalry forward as an advance force.⁵⁷

12. For some reason, a belief and rumour now spread around Otho's front line that the Vitellians were going to come over to them.⁵⁸ When they drew close, the Othonians consequently greeted them warmly as their 'fellow-soldiers'. But the address was not well received, and the Vitellians replied angrily with warlike shouts; this dispirited those who had given the greeting, and the rest of their own men began to suspect them of treachery. That was the first setback to disturb the Othonians, at a time when the enemy was already close at hand. Then everything else happened in a disordered and undisciplined way: the baggage-train became entangled with the combatants and impeded them, while the battle-line was broken up at many points by the terrain, which was full of ditches and earthworks that they skirted nervously; thus they were forced to engage the enemy in a thoroughly confused and fragmented way. Only two 'legions' (as the Romans call their regiments), Vitellius's 'Ravager' and Otho's 'Helper',⁵⁹ deployed on to an open and unencumbered plain, and these joined in a regular type of battle and fought in formation for a long time. Otho's men were vigorous and brave, but this was their first experience of warfare

and battle;⁶⁰ Vitellius's troops were by contrast very experienced fighters, but they were already old and past their best. Otho's troops therefore forced them back with their charge and took their eagle, killing the front line almost to a man; but this filled the Vitellians with shame and fury, and they attacked and killed the legionary commander Orfidius⁶¹ and took many of the Othonian standards.

Otho's gladiators were thought to be experienced and courageous men in close encounters, and so Alfenus Varus led the so-called 'Batavians' against them.⁶² These are German cavalry of the highest quality, who come from an island in the middle of the Rhine. Only a few of the gladiators stood up to their attack, and most fled towards the river, fell into the hands of some enemy cohorts who were stationed there and were all cut down in action. The worst performance of all came from the praetorians,⁶³ who did not even wait to come to blows with the enemy; instead, they took to flight, and as they passed through the ranks of their undefeated comrades they filled them with fear and panic. Still, many of the Othonians did defeat the troops stationed against them, and forced their way through the victorious enemy to regain their camp.

13. As for the generals, neither Proculus nor Paulinus ventured to enter the camp with the troops; they withdrew instead, so nervous were they of the soldiers, who were already beginning to blame their generals for everything.⁶⁴ In the town Annius Gallus rallied the defeated troops as they gathered again after the battle and tried to console them: it had been a close battle, he said – indeed, in many sectors they had actually defeated the enemy.⁶⁵ Marius Celsus collected the officers and asked them to consider the public interest.⁶⁶ He put it to them that the defeat had been so severe and the carnage of citizens so dreadful that not even Otho, if he were a man of quality, would wish to make any further trial of fortune.⁶⁷ They should remember Cato and Scipio, who had refused to capitulate to Julius Caesar after Pharsalus⁶⁸ – but even they had incurred criticism for it, because this had wasted the lives of many good men in Libya, and they had been fighting in the cause of Roman liberty. In most ways fortune might give herself equally to everyone, but there was one thing that she could not take from a man of quality, and that was the capacity even in defeat to think sensibly about the problems that were before him.

The captains found Celsus's arguments persuasive. Then he sounded the ordinary troops and found them eager for peace, with Titianus saying that they should send a delegation to press for concord: so they agreed that Celsus and Gallus should go and talk to Caecina and Valens. As they were on their way they were met by some centurions,

who told them that the Vitellian forces were already on the move towards Bedriacum, and that they themselves had been sent by their generals to negotiate for concord. Celsus and his party showed their approval and asked them to turn around and come with them to meet Caecina and his colleagues. When they were coming close to Caecina, Celsus nearly lost his life. For it so happened that the cavalry who had earlier lost the battle of the ambush⁶⁹ were riding out: when they caught sight of Celsus, they immediately gave a shout and bore down on him. The centurions barred the way, and the other captains too shouted out for Celsus to be spared: Caecina and his colleagues heard the cries, rode out and swiftly put a stop to the indiscipline of the cavalry. They greeted Celsus warmly, and went on with him to Bedriacum.

At this point Titianus began to regret having sent the delegation,⁷⁰ and so he took the soldiers who were most bold and self-confident and put them on the walls, while calling on the others to come to their help. But when Caecina rode up to the walls with his right hand extended, nobody offered any further resistance; some shouted greetings to the soldiers from the walls, others opened the gates and began to mingle with the men coming towards them. No one did anyone any harm; there were friendly greetings, hands were clasped and everyone came over to Vitellius and took the oath in his name.

14. That is the version of the battle given by most of the people who were there, though they themselves do not claim precise knowledge of every detail, given the disorder and the different course which the battle took in different areas. I myself was later walking through the plain, and Mestrius Florus, a consular who had been on Otho's side through necessity rather than conviction, showed me an ancient temple.⁷¹ He had come here after the battle, he said, and had seen a pile of corpses so high that they reached the temple's gables. He told me that he had never been able to find out the explanation, for nobody had been able to tell him. It is not surprising that there should be more people killed in a civil war when a side is routed: no one is ever taken alive, for there is no way of turning prisoners to profit;⁷² but it is not easy to think of a reason why all the corpses should have been collected together and piled up like this.

15. News of the battle began to reach Otho. The first indications were unclear and uncertain, as is usually the case with such momentous events, but then some of the wounded came from the field with accounts of what had happened.⁷³ It is not surprising that his friends urged Otho not to give up or despair, but what is really incredible is the behaviour of his troops: no one deserted him or defected to the enemy, and no one was seen to look to his own safety or abandon

concern for the leader; all alike came to the door of his tent, hailed him as Emperor,⁷⁴ pleaded with him in humble supplication as he went out, grasped his hands, fell at his feet and begged him tearfully not to forsake them nor to abandon them to the enemy, but to make use of their bodies and souls for his service as long there was breath left in them. These were the entreaties of all alike; then there was one man in particular, a common soldier, who drew his sword. 'You can be sure, Caesar, that all your men serve you like this,' he cried, and killed himself.⁷⁵

None of this broke Otho's resolve. He looked around, his face firm and smiling. 'This day', he said, 'is a happier one for me, comrades, than that first day when you made me emperor: that is what it means to have followers like yourselves, and to be so highly valued. There is one greater prize still, and you must not take it away from me: to die a noble death for so many fine citizens. If I am a worthy emperor of Rome, I must sacrifice my own life for my country. I know that the enemy's victory is not firm or secure: they tell me that our army from Moesia is only a few days' march away, and is already reaching the Adriatic;⁷⁶ Asia, Syria, Egypt and the armies fighting Judaea are on our side;⁷⁷ the senate is with us; so are our opponents' wives and children. But this is not a war to save Italy against some Hannibal or Pyrrhus or Cimbri;⁷⁸ these are Romans fighting Romans, and in victory or defeat alike our country is the victim. Even the victor's gain is our country's loss. You can be sure, and you can often reflect, that I can die more nobly than I can rule. For I cannot see that any victory of mine can achieve as much for Rome as the sacrifice of my life for peace, for concord and to save Italy from ever seeing such a day again.'⁷⁹

16. These were his words. His followers came before him and tried to encourage him, but he remained firm. He asked his friends to leave; he added further words for the senators who were present and messages for those who were not;⁸⁰ he sent instructions to the cities to treat them with honour and to ensure their safety. Then he went aside with his nephew Cocceius,⁸¹ who was still a teenager, and told him not to despair nor to fear Vitellius, whose mother and wife and family he had himself protected as if they were his own. That, he said, was why he had decided not to adopt him, though he had wanted to; but he had preferred to delay the adoption,⁸² so that he could become his partner in empire if he won, not in death if he lost. 'And I have one last piece of advice to leave in your trust,' he added. 'Your uncle was a Caesar: that is one thing never wholly to forget, and never to remember too well.'⁸³

Soon a confused noise was heard, then shouting at the doors. The

soldiers were threatening to kill the departing senators, unless they agreed to stay rather than desert their emperor.⁸⁴ Otho went out again, fearing for the men's safety. This time his appearance to the soldiers was not one of entreaty or mildness, but ferocity; he angrily looked at those who were being particularly troublesome. That made them desist in terror, and they went away.

17. It was already evening,⁸⁵ and he grew thirsty and drank a little water. He had two swords, and he spent a long time examining their blades. Then he gave one back, took the other under his arm, and called his servants. He spoke to them warmly, and distributed money to each. Different servants received different amounts; it was not as if he was throwing money away that was no longer his own, but taking care of it according to what was reasonable and appropriate for each person. Then he sent these men away, and slept for the rest of the night; his chamberlains noticed that it was a deep sleep. Early next morning he called for a freedman who had helped him in making arrangements for the senators, and he told him to find out what had happened to them. He heard that the departing senators had all received what they had needed. 'Go now,' he said to the freedman, 'and make sure the soldiers can see you; that is the way to avoid dying miserably at their hands, accused of playing a part in my death.' The man left. Otho took the sword and held it upright with both hands, then he fell on it from above. He gave just one groan as he felt the pain, and those outside heard it.

The slaves raised a wail, and the whole camp and city was immediately filled with weeping. The soldiers fell with a shout on the doors and cried openly, lamenting and blaming themselves for failing to protect their emperor and to stop him from dying on their behalf. Nobody left, nobody looked to their own safety, despite the closeness of the enemy; instead they prepared and adorned the body, built a funeral pyre and took out the body under arms.⁸⁶ Those who seized the chance of acting as pallbearers⁸⁷ did so proudly, regarding it as a great honour. As for the rest, some fell on the body and kissed the wound, some grasped his hands, some fell to the ground in worship at a distance.⁸⁸ Some lit the pyre with torches and then killed themselves, even though there was no clear benefit that they owed to the dead man, and no clear danger to fear from his victor. But it seems that no previous tyrant or king had felt so intense or frenzied a lust for rule as these people felt for being ruled, and for serving Otho as his subjects. Not even his death relieved them of this yearning;⁸⁹ it remained, and transformed into an implacable hatred of Vitellius.

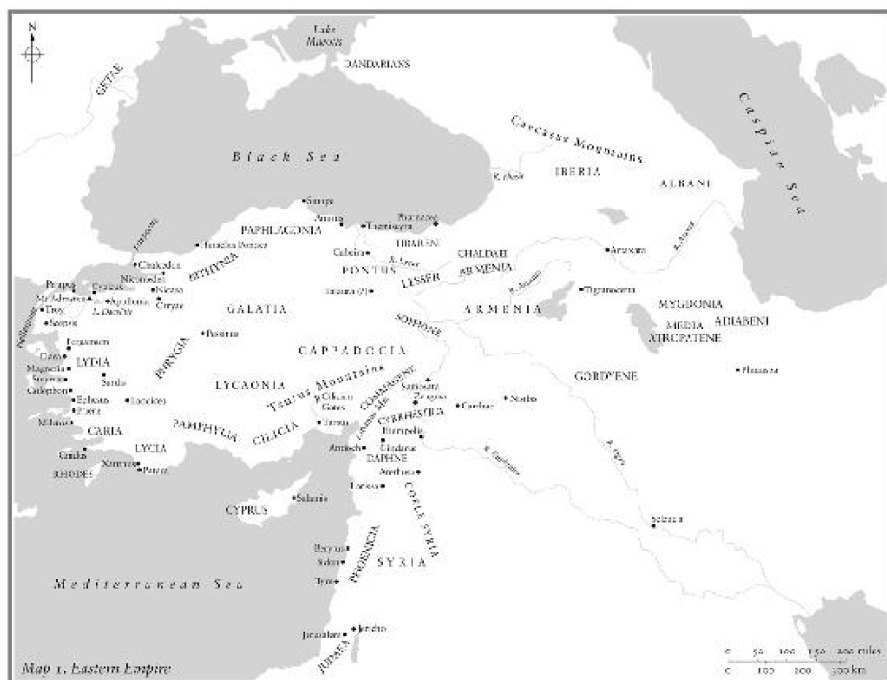
18. It is time to tell the rest of the story. They buried Otho's remains; there was no big tomb or proud inscription to leave the grave

vulnerable to envy. When I was in Brixillum I saw it myself, a tomb of modest size and an inscription which could be translated 'Inscribed as a marker of Marcus Otho'.⁹⁰

Otho was thirty-seven years old when he died.⁹¹ He had been emperor for three months. He left behind him as many distinguished men to praise his death as had censured his life. His life was no better than Nero's; his death was nobler.

One of the two prefects, Plotius,⁹² instructed his men to take the oath immediately in Vitellius's name, but they reacted angrily. Then they discovered that some of the senators were still there. They let the others go, but caused Verginius Rufus some trouble, coming to his house under arms and calling on him again and inviting him to accept rule or to negotiate on their behalf. Verginius thought it would be madness to accept the empire now it was offered him by a defeated army, when he had refused before to accept it from a victorious one;⁹³ he was reluctant too to go as an envoy to the Germans, since he felt that he had often forced them to accept measures they had not wanted. So he stole away by some other door.⁹⁴ When the soldiers realized what had happened, they accepted the oath and went over to Caecina, who granted them pardon.

MAPS







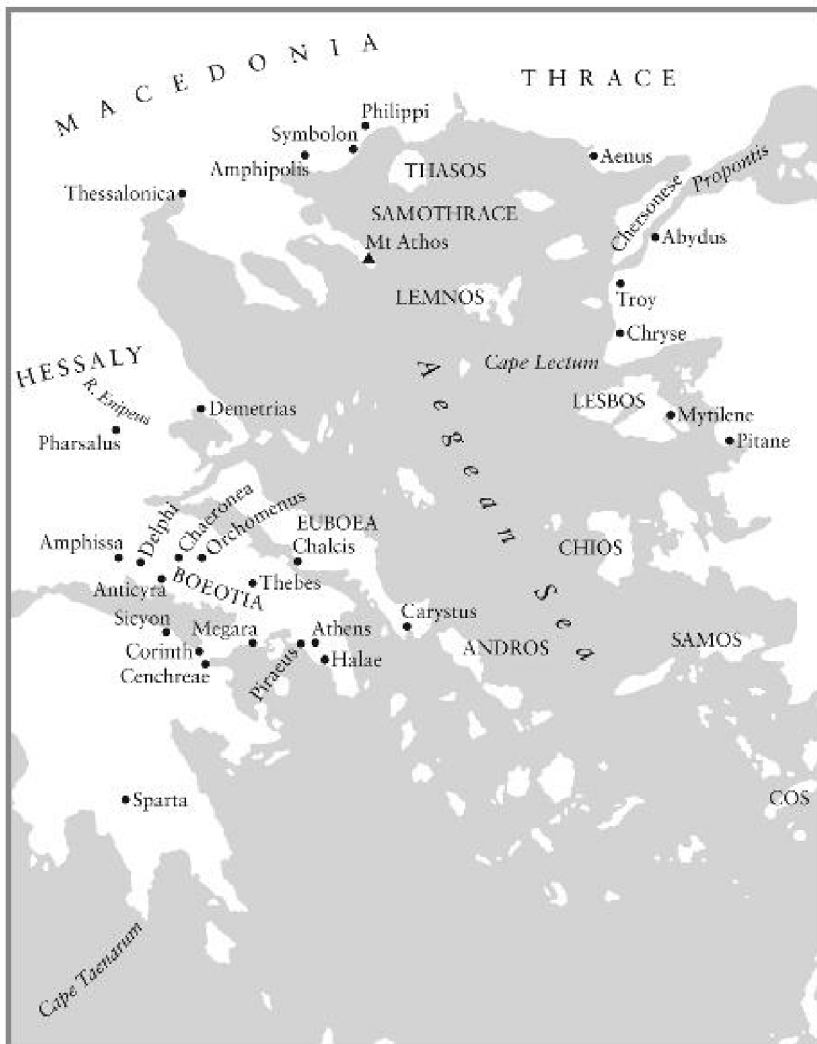




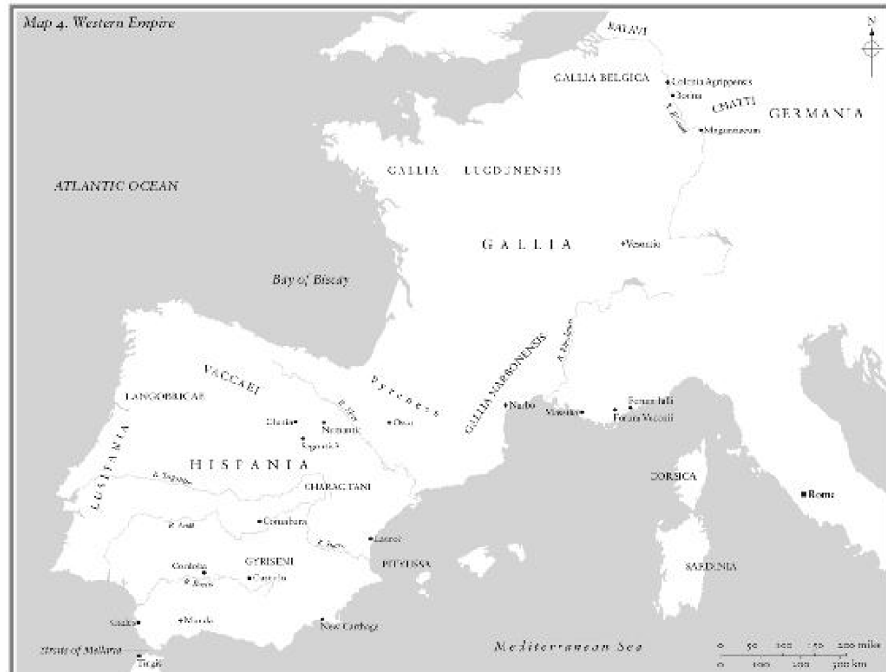




Map 3. Greece

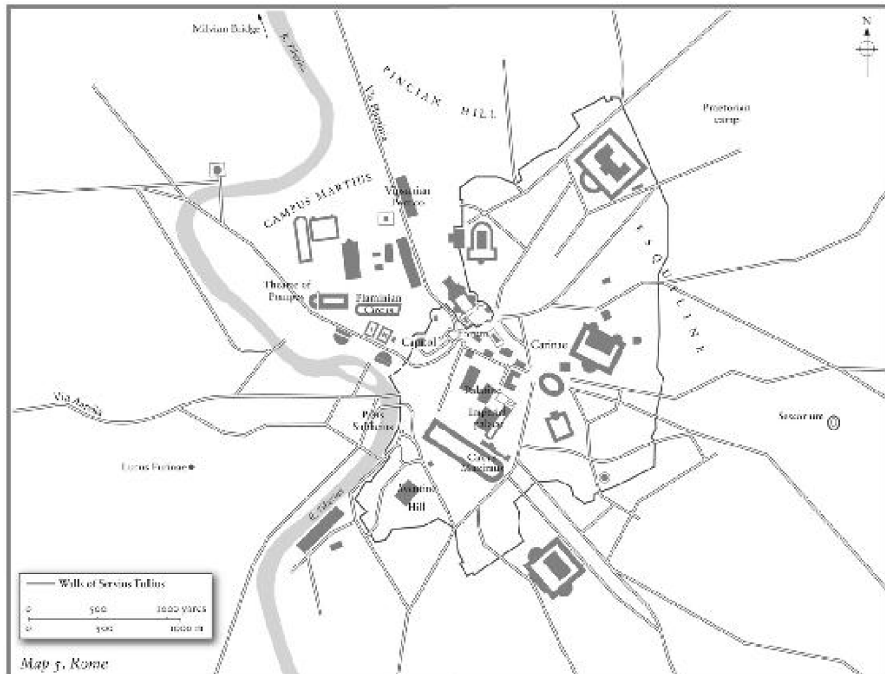


Map 4. Western Empire

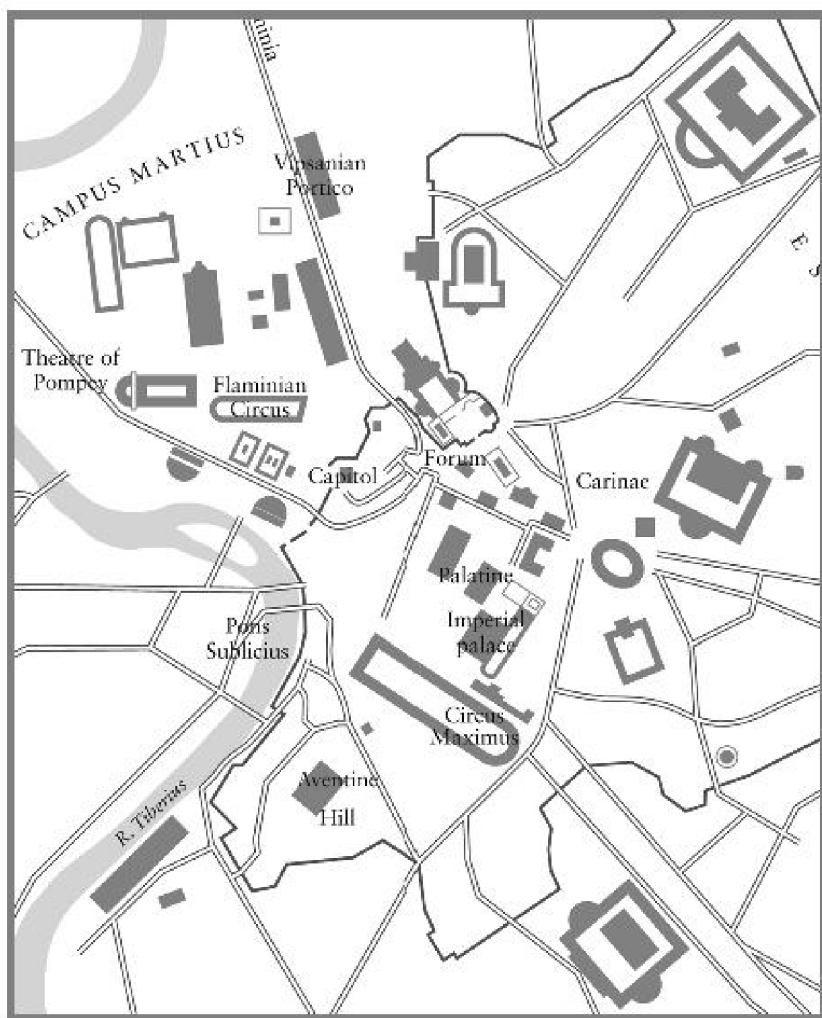


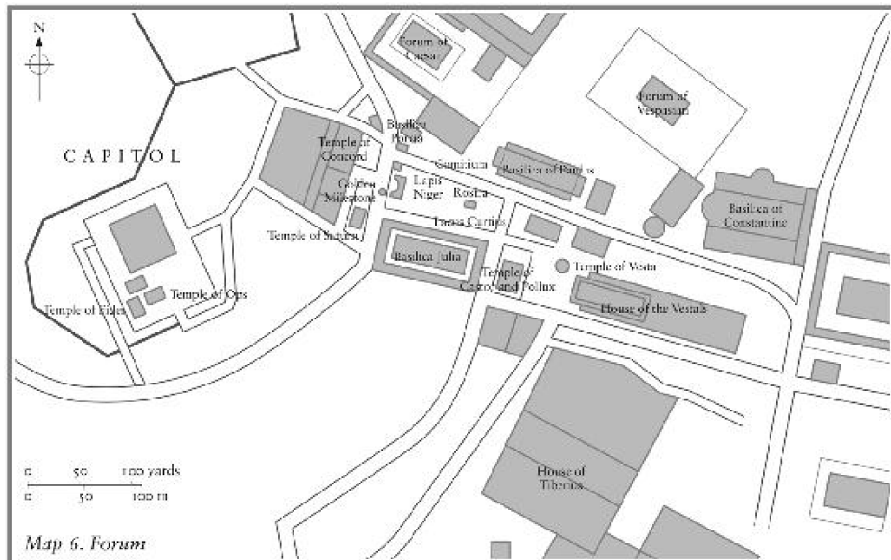




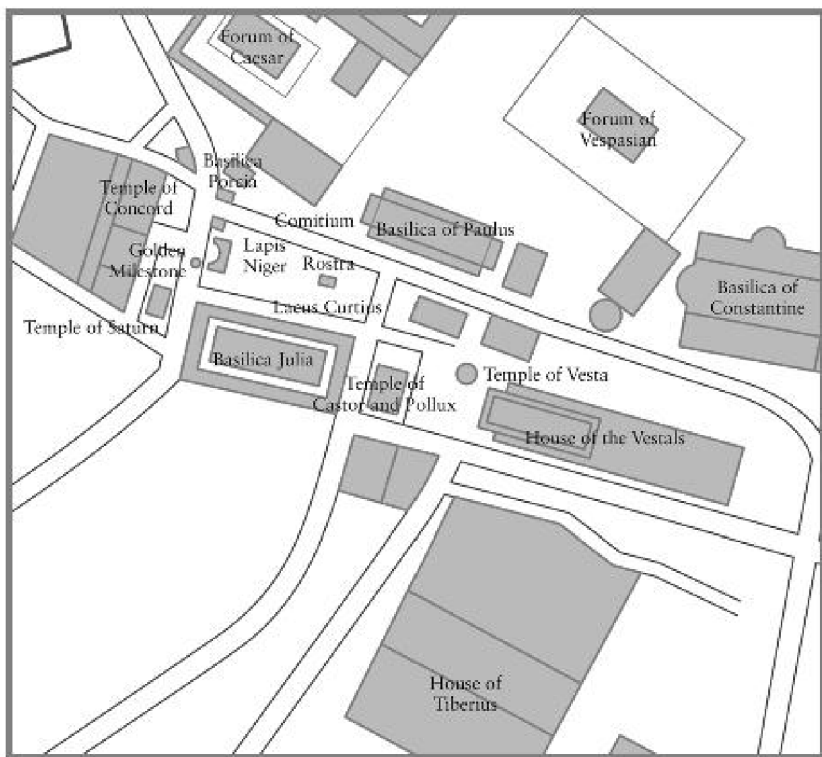


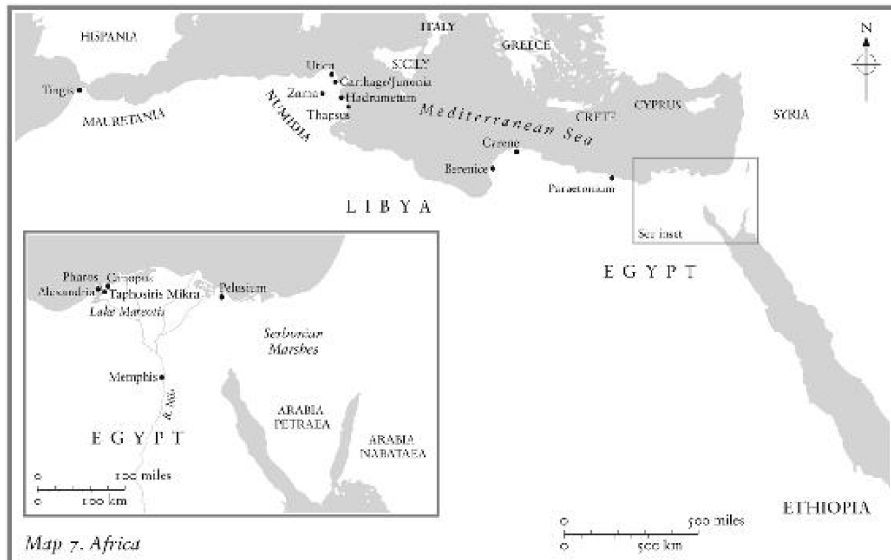
Map 5. Rome

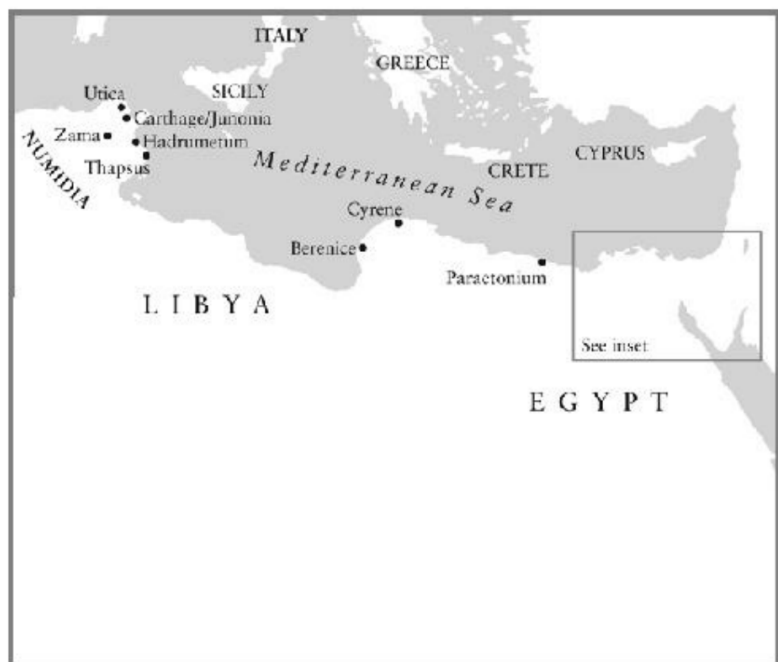




Map 6. Forum









THE GRACCHI

Further Reading

The fragments of Tiberius's and Gaius's speeches are printed by Malcovati in *ORF* (Tiberius, pp. 145–52; Gaius, pp. 174–98). A. W. Lintott gives a penetrating survey of the political background in *CAH* ix₂ (1994), pp. 40–103: he discusses the Gracchi themselves at pp. 62–86. D. L. Stockton, *The Gracchi* (1979), is a book-length study covering both brothers; A. Bernstein, *Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus* (1978), limits himself to Tiberius. There is much to learn from E. Badian's 'Tiberius Gracchus and the beginning of the Roman Revolution' in *ANRW* i.1 (1972), 668–731. P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (1971), is invaluable on the demographic background.

Notes to the Introduction to the Gracchi

1. On *Galba* and *Otho* see Intros. to those Lives. Here note especially the way *C. Gracch.* begins ('After his brother's death ...', which would be very abrupt in a free-standing Life. Similarly the preface to *Ti. Gracch.* serves for both brothers: notice in particular the material on Gaius's oratory, *Ti. Gracch.* 2. But it is true that the quite complex events between 133 and 123 are passed over quickly in the last chapter of *Ti. Gracch.* and the opening of *C. Gracch.*
2. Strictly speaking, the chapter numeration should therefore be continuous, with the first chapter of *C. Gracch.* referred to as 'Gracchi 22' and the first of *Comp. Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.* 'Gracchi 41': that numeration is sometimes used, but remains less usual than the separation of the two Lives. In this edition the continuous numbering is added in brackets after the traditional one at the beginning of each chapter.
3. For *Romulus* and *Caesar* see Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 7.
4. So much so that Lintott in *CAH* ix₂ (1994), p. 66, suggests that the model of Agis and Cleomenes was in the minds both of the brothers and of their opponents.
5. On Plutarch's presentation of these women see A. Powell,

‘Spartan women assertive in politics? Plutarch’s *Lives of Agis and Kleomenes*’ in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, ed. S. Hodkinson and A. Powell (1999), pp. 393–419.

6. Perhaps this ‘you’ is Sosius Senecio, the dedicatee of the *Parallel Lives* as a whole (General Intro. II), or perhaps a more general address to the reader: this ‘you’ recurs, again ambiguously, at the close of *Comp. Agis–Cleom–Gracch.* (see n. 17 there).
7. In particular *Agis* 6–7, *Cleom.* 1–2, *Ti. Gracch.* 8 (where notice Tiberius’s resentment that a certain Spurius Postumius was outstripping him in fame), 9 and *C. Gracch.* 8.
8. See esp. *Philopoemen.* 3 and the comments in the introduction to the translation of *Philopoemen* that will appear in the new Penguin Classic *Alexander and his Successors*.
9. But notice that at *Ti. Gracch.* 21 Plutarch avoids expressing explicit agreement with Scipio’s harsh view (‘So may everyone perish who chooses to act in this way’), even though its closural position inevitably gives it weight (see n. 97 there).
10. Esp. *Ti. Gracch.* 9, 10 (where notice the insinuation that Octavius had selfish reasons for opposing the bill), 13 (a similar insinuation about Nasica), 16, 19–20, *C. Gracch.* 8–9, 13–14, 16–17.
11. Esp. *Ti. Gracch.* 12, *C. Gracch.* 13–16.
12. *C. Gracch.* 14–15.
13. Cicero: on Octavius, *Brut.* 95; on Opimius: *Cat.* 1.4, *Pro Plancio* 69–70, *Phil.* 8.14, *Pro Milone* 8, 83; on Livius Drusus: *Brut.* 99, 109, *Fin.* 4.66. For more generalized disapproval, *Brut.* 126, *Sest.* 30, *Amic.* 37, 41, *De Or.* 1.38, *De Haruspicum Responsis* 41 (see also below, n. 25).
14. See *C. Gracch.* nn. 27 and 64.
15. Esp. Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*: see also General Intro. II.
16. See below, n. 22.
17. Cf. also *C. Gracch.* 12, with nn. 14 and 57.
18. I develop this point in Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 9, discussing Plutarch’s treatment of the Gracchi in particular on pp. 214–16.
19. Thus E. Badian (*Foreign Clientelae* (1958), pp. 168–74) argued that Tiberius’s land-grants were limited to citizens, A. Bernstein (*Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus* (1978), pp. 137–59) that Tiberius first planned to include Italian allies but then decided to limit it to Roman citizens, J. Richardson (*JRS* 70 (1980), 1–11) that some Italian allies would be included and would receive the citizenship as well, Lintott (*CAH* ix² (1994), pp. 63–4) that there would be no new allotments for non-citizens but some previous non-Roman possessions may have survived, H. Mouritsen (*Italian Unification* (1998), pp. 15–22) that Italians may have been ‘secondary

- beneficiaries of a plan which was designed above all to benefit the Roman *plebs*' and E. Bispham (*From Asculum to Actium* (2007), pp. 123–7) that Latins and Italians, even though (he thinks) excluded from the distributions, were allowed some rights to occupy what had hitherto been public land.
20. E. Gabba, *Appiano e la Storia delle Guerre Civili* (1956), pp. 34–88, and in his Italian edition of *Civil Wars* 1 (1958), pp. xxviii–xxxix; Pollio in the Lives of the later period: General Intro. III.
 21. See e.g. E. Badian's review of Gabba's *Appiano* in *Classical Review* 8 (1958), 159–62.
 22. So T. P. Wiseman, *Roman Drama and Roman History* (1998), pp. 52–9, and J. L. Beness and T. W. Hillard, *CQ* 51 (2001), 135–40: note also the counter-arguments of A. Keaveney, *Klio* 85 (2003), 322–32. The similarity of texture of all *Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.*, even though the Greek material is clearly drawn from different sources from the Roman, supports the view that it is Plutarch himself rather than any source who is responsible for this.
 23. See above, n. 14.
 24. Cf. n. 13 above, and *Ti. Gracch.* 2 and n. 8.
 25. If we can trust his epitomator: Livy *Perioche* 60 and 61. For similar hostility cf. Vell. 2.2–3, 6; Val Max. 3.2.17, 4.7.1–2, 5.3.2e–f, 8.10.1; Florus 2.2–3 is not sympathetic, but a little more measured.

Notes to Tiberius Gracchus

1. *Agis and Cleomenes*: For the pairing see *Comp. Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.* Agis IV ruled Sparta from about 244 to 241 BCE, and attempted to redress the distribution of wealth and of land by reviving some of the ancient institutions attributed to Lycurgus. He was deposed and executed at the age of twenty-four. Cleomenes III, whose reign lasted from about 235 to 222 BCE, also attempted 'Lycurgan' reforms. He was defeated by Antigonos of Macedon at Sellasia in 222, fled to Egypt, and committed suicide there in 220/19.
2. *Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus ... his achievements*: Ti. Sempronius Gracchus senior (*OCD*³ Sempronius Gracchus (2)) was consul in 177 and 163 and censor in 169 BCE. He was awarded triumphs for his victories in Farther Spain and Sardinia.
3. *Cornelia*: The 'great-spirited' Cornelia of *On The Virtues of Women* 243d, see S. Dixon, *Cornelia: Mother of the Gracchi* (2007). She was revered by later generations for her motherly virtues (Tac. *Dial.* 28); Cicero, who had read the letters attributed to her (*C. Gracch.* 13 with n. 65), thought that her sons owed much of their rhetorical virtuosity to her training and example (Cic. *Brut.* 104,

211). Plutarch rounds off the double Life by returning to the exemplary Cornelia (*C. Gracch.* 19). He returns to the choice of Tiberius as a husband in ch. 4.

4. *There is a story*: The story was told by C. Gracchus himself (*Cic. Div.* 1.36, 2.62), presumably in the ‘pamphlet’ mentioned in ch. 8.
5. *twelve children by him*: Curiously, the twelve births were alternately male and female (*Pliny Natural History* 7.57).
6. *Ptolemy*: Presumably Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II at some point after he regained the Egyptian throne in 145 BCE, but the story is very dubious, and may well have its roots in contemporary propaganda. So L.-M. Günther, *Historia* 39 (1990), 124–8, regarding it as a repudiation of the family’s alleged royalist leanings (cf. ch. 14 and n. 63); it could equally come from an enemy, claiming that this was the company they kept.
7. *Scipio Africanus the younger*: P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus (modern scholars normally call him just ‘Scipio Aemilianus’), the natural son of Aemilius Paullus. His marriage to this Sempronius may not have been happy: at least, his wife (along with Cornelia) was suspected of responsibility for his mysterious death (*C. Gracch.* 10 and n. 52 there). The opening pair of Plutarch’s Parallel Lives was *Epaminondas and Scipio* (General Intro. II): probably this Scipio, to judge from *Ti. Gracch.* 21 and *C. Gracch.* 10, and Aemilianus’s renowned combination of action and culture would make him an ideal figure for this flagship role.
8. *Gaius was ... impassioned*: Plutarch returns to the theme of Gaius’s passionate oratory in *C. Gracch.* 1. Cicero contrasts Gaius’s rhetoric, which he found admirable, with the political stance that he generally deplored; *Brut.* 126, *har. resp.* 41. Others agreed: *Livy Perioche* 60, *Vell.* 2.6, *Val. Max.* 8.10.1.
9. *the rostra*: the speakers’ platform between the comitium and the forum, decorated with the ‘beaks’ (*rostra*) of ships captured in 338 BCE.
10. *Cleon the Athenian ... slap his thigh*: At *Nicias* 8 Plutarch makes the same point about Cleon, and adds that his rhetorical style introduced ‘among the politicians an irresponsibility and a disregard for propriety which before long were to throw the affairs of Athens into chaos’. Here too a note of disapproval may be sensed, and a presaging of worse to come (‘the first Roman to ...’). Plutarch’s own tastes were for a more restrained style (*Advice on Public Life* 5–9), important though he knew delivery to be (*Cic.* 5, *Dem.* 7).
11. *Drusus*: See *C. Gracch.* 8 and n. 44.
12. *1,250 drachmas a pound*: The drachma was taken to be the equivalent of the Roman denarius, so this figure corresponds to

6,000 sesterces. Pliny *Natural History* 33.147 says 5,000, including these dolphins in a list of notoriously extravagant silverware.

13. *Tiberius ... was nine years older than his brother*: Tiberius was born in 163 BCE.
14. *if only ... irresistible*: Plutarch rather likes such 'virtual history' speculation on what might have been (cf. e.g. *Ant.* 50, *Caes.* 26, *Luc.* 36, *Flam.* 9, *Fortune of the Romans* 321f–322a and the end of ch. 7).
15. *college of augurs*: There were at this time nine augurs, who co-opted a new member when a vacancy arose. The date of Tiberius's co-optation is unknown.
16. *Appius Claudius ... censor and consul*: Appius Claudius Pulcher was consul in 143 and censor in 136 BCE.
17. *leader of the senate*: An honorary distinction which at this period was conferred by the censors: the man's name would then be entered first on the senate list. In this case the distinction was conferred on himself by Appius in 136 BCE when other senior men, including Scipio Aemilianus, had a strong claim. If Plutarch knew this, he would hardly approve.
18. *some writers relate ... Scipio Africanus*: They are also cited, but not named, by Livy 38.57, who like Plutarch notes the disagreement on whether Cornelia was betrothed before or after Scipio's death. Livy leaves the matter undecided.
19. *Polybius*: Probably in a passage that has not survived, though Plutarch may simply be drawing a reasonable inference from Polybius 31.27.2–3, where Cornelia's mother is the one who pays her dowry. The alternative version, making Scipio betroth the daughter himself, is the one given by Cic. *De Inventione* 1.91, Val. Max. 4.2.3, Seneca *Controversiae* 5.2.3 and others. See F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* iii (1979) on the Polybius passage: Polybius and Plutarch are likely to be right about Cornelia's betrothal, though it need not follow that there is any truth in this Appius story.
20. *her father had left her ... unbetrothed*: This explains Plutarch's careful language in ch. 1, 'was ... considered worthy to marry'.
21. *served for a period in Africa*: In the Third Punic War, which ended with the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE.
22. *Scipio Africanus ... who had married his sister*: Ch. 1 and n. 7.
23. *shared a tent with his commander*: Upper-class young men frequently served as a commander's *contubernales*, lit. 'quarter-sharers', i.e. members of his personal staff who would gain experience under a watchful eye: thus the young Agricola was picked by his commander Suetonius Paulinus 'to be tested in his *contubernium*' (Tac. *Agr.* 5.1). But (as *Cato* 9 shows) officers did

not literally 'share tents', and here as at *Ant.* 13 Plutarch seems to have taken the Latin term too literally.

24. *Fannius*: His history (*HRR* i.139–41; H. Beck and U. Walter, *Die Frühen Römischen Historiker* i (2001), pp. 340–47) dealt with the Gracchan period and included anti-Gracchan speeches (*Cic. Brut.* 81); Sallust praised its truthfulness (*Hist.* 1.4 M = 3 McG.), Cicero did not admire its style (*Brut.* 101, *De Legibus* 1.6). His identification with the politician Fannius, later prominent in the Life of Gaius as a turncoat (8, 11, 12), was a puzzle for Cicero (*Att.* 12.5b) and is still uncertain. Plutarch probably took them to be the same person, and mentions him here to highlight his later change of tune.
25. *quaestor*: Tiberius was quaestor in 137 BCE.
26. *Gaius Mancinus*: C. Hostilius Mancinus, consul in 137 BCE.
27. *they would trust no Roman except Tiberius*: The Numantines had good reason for their distrust: two years earlier the senate had repudiated peace-terms that had been agreed with Q. Pompeius (*MRR* i.482), and similar faithlessness was possible now, as the events of ch. 7 would show (see nn. there).
28. *his father Tiberius ... strictest justice*: Tiberius's father's campaign took place in 179 (*MRR* i.393); his humane settlement was famous (*App. Iberians* 43).
29. *anxious ... to recover the tablets*: For a similar concern to preserve one's accounts cf. *Cato* 38.
30. *delivered ... dishonourable terms*: In 321 BCE the Roman army had been trapped by the Samnites in the Caudine Forks and compelled to submit to the humiliation of passing under the yoke. The senate rejected the terms of surrender, on the ground that such a treaty could not be made without the consent of the Roman people (*MRR* i.150–51, 152).
31. *not saving Mancinus from punishment*: Mancinus himself supported the proposal before the assembly and he was handed over, but the Numantines refused to accept him. The case is discussed by N. Rosenstein in *Classical Antiquity* 5.2 (1986), 230–52.
32. *not insisting ... ratified*: The senate declared the treaty invalid and replaced Mancinus with his colleague M. Aemilius Lepidus Porcina (*MRR* i.482).
33. *Scipio ... agrarian reform*: Scipio left for Numantia in 134 (*MRR* i.490). Tiberius's death and the capture of Numantia both took place in the following year (*MRR* i.493–4).
34. *500 iugera*: About 311.5 acres or 126 hectares. Traditionally the 500-iugera limit was imposed by the Lex Licinia of 367 BCE (*Livy* 6.35.5, *Varro de Re Rustica* 1.2.9; *MRR* i.109, 114); but *App. Civil Wars* 1.8, in a passage closely similar to that of Plutarch and

probably deriving from the same source (Intro.), seems to refer to a much more recent law, though that may be only Appian's own inference. If there were two laws, it is disputed which of them imposed the limit (cf. the discussion of S. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy Books VI–X* i (1997), pp. 654–9). Appian suggests that there was a further limit on the number of animals that could be pastured on common land (100 bigger and 500 smaller animals).

35. *Gaius Laelius*: Laelius launched his agrarian measure perhaps as praetor (145 BCE), more likely as consul (140); we do not know what it proposed. His friendship with Scipio was celebrated by Cicero in his dialogue *Laelius de Amicitia* (*On Friendship*). It is possible that he earned his nickname 'the wise' because of his political prudence, as Plutarch suggests: it may also have been because of his connections with Greek philosophers, especially Panaetius.
36. *Diophanes the orator and Blossius the philosopher*: Little is known of either other than their connections with Tiberius: for their later actions and fate see chs. 17, 20, and on Blossius D. R. Dudley, *JRS* 31 (1941), 94–9. The influence of Greek philosophy on the Gracchi is disputed (Badian, 'Tiberius Gracchus', pp. 679–81), but the emphasis here suits Plutarch's theme of the problematic application of visionary idealism (Intro.).
37. *not yet as the mother of the Gracchi*: This theme is picked up at *C. Gracch.* 4 (n. 23).
38. *Spurius Postumius*: Not certainly identified: perhaps the son of the consul of 148, perhaps the future consul of 110 BCE.
39. *pamphlet*: Gaius also told the serpent-story of Tiberius's birth (ch. 1 and n. 4), presumably in the same work, and so it may well have taken the form of a narrative life-story. It was addressed to a certain 'M. Pomponius', probably the same man as the loyal friend of *C. Gracch.* 16–17.
40. *slogans and appeals on ... walls of houses*: Just as the people would later stir up Brutus against Julius Caesar: *Caes.* 62, *Brut.* 9.
41. *Crassus the Pontifex Maximus*: P. Licinius Crassus Dives Mucianus, the future consul of 131. His daughter Licinia was by now already married to Gaius Gracchus (ch. 21). He in fact became pontifex maximus only in 132 (*MRR* i.499), after Tiberius's death: Plutarch seems to know that Scipio Nasica was still pontifex maximus at this time (ch. 21 and n. 96), so it may be that his language here ('Crassus the Pontifex Maximus') is simply a misleading shorthand to distinguish him from other Crassi, rather as one might say that 'Wittgenstein the philosopher' was (wrongly) said to have been one of Hitler's classmates. For a similar case see *Luc.* 1 with n. 8.
42. *Mucius Scaevola the jurist*: Scaevola was Crassus's brother, and

went on to succeed him as pontifex maximus in 130. He was consul in 133 BCE.

43. *Appius Claudius ... Tiberius's own father-in-law*: Ch. 4.
44. *'The wild beasts ... truly their own'*: It is unusual for Plutarch, here and in ch. 15, to include such an extensive version of a speech: in this he differs from the tradition of Greek and Roman historiography. App. *Civil Wars* 1.9 and 11 also quotes speeches of Tiberius. It is likely that the substance of these quotations is authentic (the version of this speech in Florus 2.2 is close to that given here), even though it is not certain that either Plutarch or Appian knew the speeches at first hand (Intro.). Tiberius's speeches certainly survived till Cicero's day (*Brut.* 104), and he too, like Plutarch, admired their eloquence. See also *C. Gracch.* 3 and n. 18.
45. *Marcus Octavius*: Nothing is known of this man other than his role in the events of 133.
46. *if a single tribune ... no avail*: Here and at *Cato* 20 Plutarch writes as if a tribune could veto only the act of a fellow-tribune: the veto in fact was much more wide-ranging (Lintott, *Constitution*, pp. 124–5). See n. 50.
47. *in defiance of the earlier laws*: Tiberius's measure also allowed the retention of up to 250 *iugera* for each child (or possibly each son). Plutarch is the only author to distinguish a more moderate first proposal and a fiercer second one: for discussion, see Stockton, *Gracchi*, pp. 57–9.
48. *as Euripides writes: Bacchae* 317–18, where Teiresias assures the intemperate Pentheus that 'even in Bacchic orgies the woman with self-control [*sophron*, the same word as used here of 'sound' upbringing] will not be corrupted'. Ironically, self-control will not last, and Tiberius will meet a fate at the hands of a frenzied crowd not so different from Pentheus's own. The Dionysiac imagery recurs in *C. Gracch.* ch. 1 (n. 4).
49. *Temple of Saturn*: This temple was used at that time as the state treasury. Cf. *Caes.* 35 for a failed attempt by a tribune to repeat Tiberius's tactic.
50. *suspended all their various functions*: Not, in fact, through simple 'alarm', but because Tiberius's veto was more far ranging than Plutarch's language has suggested (n. 46): Badian, 'Tiberius Gracchus', p. 707 and n. 117, and Lintott, *Constitution*, p. 125.
51. *voting urns*: The urns from which lots were drawn in order to decide the order in which the tribes would vote; baskets rather than urns were used for the voting itself (Lintott, *Constitution*, pp. 46, 48).
52. *two men of consular rank*: If Plutarch is right about the 'consular

rank', 'Manlius' might be T. Manlius Torquatus (consul in 165), A. Manlius Torquatus (consul in 164) – though both, if still alive, would be very senior – or more likely M'. Manilius (consul in 149); 'Fulvius' will be either Ser. Fulvius Flaccus (consul in 135) or C. Fulvius Flaccus (consul in 134).

53. *neither constitutional nor appropriate*: It was unclear at the time whether the deposition of a tribune was constitutional or not: the issue is discussed in most of the works cited in the Further Reading above. Some of the arguments were stated clearly enough by Tiberius himself in the speech quoted in ch. 15. It was a good question whether a tribune forfeited the sacrosanctity which his office gave him when he was thwarting the wishes of the people, given that it was the people to whom he owed the office.
54. *thirty-five tribes*: Each tribe's vote was decided by the majority within the tribe.
55. *the campaign against the Numantines*: See ch. 7 and n. 31.
56. *Mucius*: Other sources call him Minucius or Mummius: *MRR* i.493, 497; Badian 'Tiberius Gracchus', pp. 711–12, n. 129.
57. *9 obols*: I.e. one and a half drachmas/denarii (n. 12), or 6 sesterces: evidently a derisory sum, but we do not know what was regular.
58. *Publius Nasica*: P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica Serapio, son of the Nasica who plays a prominent role in Plutarch's *Aemilius Paullus*, grandson of Scipio Africanus and Tiberius's cousin. He had been consul in 138 BCE.
59. *dressed himself in mourning*: The gesture was especially striking as tribunes in office would not regularly change their clothes even when in mourning.
60. *his two children*: App., *Civil Wars* 1.12 speaks of only one son; Val. Max. 9.7.2 indicates that Tiberius had at this time two sons, one an infant. L. Gamberale, *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 123 (1995), 433–40, suggests that Appian was right, that Tiberius would have left the infant at home, and that Plutarch misunderstood the Latin *liberi* in a source, perhaps Fannius (n. 23): despite its plural form, *liberi* can mean a single child (Gellius 2.13.1).
61. *King Attalus Philometor*: Attalus III of Pergamum, who had ruled since 138 BCE and died in late 134 or early 133.
62. *give offence to the senate*: Though there were precedents for politicians by-passing the senate to bring legislation before the people, the senate had retained control of foreign policy, and this made Tiberius's action especially provocative.
63. *Pompeius*: Q. Pompeius, the consul of 141 BCE. According to

Orosius 5.8.4, Pompeius promised to bring an indictment against Tiberius as soon as he demitted office. The charge of seeking kingship was certainly thrown at Tiberius (Sallust *Jug.* 31.7, Cic. *Amic.* 41): see also nn. 6, 69, 76, 100.

64. *diadem*: A simple headband, usually white, that was a symbol of royalty among Hellenistic kings (cf. *Luc.* 18 and 28, *Ant.* 12).
65. *Quintus Metellus*: Q. Metellus Macedonicus, consul in 143. A speech of his against Tiberius was included in the history of Fannius, according to Cic. *Brut.* 81 (Intro.).
66. *censor*: In 169 BCE (*MRR* i.423–4).
67. *Titus Annius*: T. Annius Luscus, consul in 153 and possibly by now the senior consular (Badian, ‘Tiberius Gracchus’, p. 715, n. 137, and *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (1964), 248). Cicero briefly describes him as ‘not lacking in eloquence’ (*Brut.* 79), and a speech against Tiberius survived till the time of Festus (fourth century CE).
68. *speech to the people*: See n. 44.
69. *the Roman state expelled him*: Traditionally in 510 BCE. Plutarch tells of the aftermath of the expulsion in *Poplicola*. If the charge of seeking kingship was already in the air (n. 63), Tiberius was fighting fire with fire, claiming that he stands in the tradition of those who introduced the free state, not of the kings.
70. *the following year*: 132 BCE. Tradition held that a law of 342 had imposed an interval of ten years before a person could be re-elected to the same magistracy (Livy 7.42.2), but it was not at all clear that this applied to the tribunate. Tiberius and his followers may have held that the tribunate was not a ‘magistracy’ in the relevant sense, as it was an office of the plebs rather than of the whole people; or that the people anyway had the right to do what it wanted. In 131 C. Carbo proposed, and C. Gracchus supported, a bill explicitly allowing re-election, but this failed (Livy *Perioche* 59, Cic. *Amic.* 96, G–C, p. 16): see n. 100.
71. *new measures*: It is disputed whether these ‘measures’ are historical, or a tendentious back-projection from the similar proposals of Gaius (*C. Gracch.* ch. 5 and nn. there): Appian does not mention them, but there are a few hints elsewhere (*MRR* i.494; G–C, p. 8; Stockton, *Gracchi*, p. 73), and Appian’s silence may be the result of his own greater interest in countryside issues.
72. *period of military service*: Those between the ages of seventeen and forty-six were currently eligible; they might serve for up to six consecutive years and were subject to the levy for up to sixteen years.
73. *equal number of knights*: For the issues here see *C. Gracch.* ch. 5 and nn. there.

74. *many of the people could not be present*: Appian explains that it was summer and the countrymen could not be there because of their work in the fields, and so Tiberius had had to turn to the city-dwellers for support (*Civil Wars* 1.14.58–9). Plutarch's 'many of the people' obscures this important difference between country and town supporters (Intro. p. 12).
75. *Blossius of Cumae*: See n. 36.
76. *playing the tyrant*: See n. 63. The rhythm here has some similarities to *Caes.* 63–4, where unfavourable omens incline Caesar to avoid the senate-house, but he is persuaded by Decimus Brutus that this will be taken by his enemies as tyrannical behaviour; but Blossius's motives here are evidently good ones, whereas Decimus is involved in the plot.
77. *Mucius*: Appian says that the lot had selected Rubrius, another tribune, to preside over the elections, but Rubrius controversially handed them over to Mucius (whom he calls 'Mummius', n. 56): *Civil Wars* 1.14.60–61.
78. *Fulvius Flaccus*: The future member of the land commission from 130 onwards and consul of 125 (*MRR* i.503, 510): for his later role cf. chs. 21, *C. Gracch.* 10, 11, 13, 18.
79. *the consul*: The presiding consul was P. Mucius Scaevola (*MRR* i.492). The senate was meeting nearby in the Temple of Fides.
80. *Nasica*: P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica (n. 58).
81. *the consul*: Scaevola (n. 79). According to Cicero (*De Domo* 91, *Pro Plancio* 88) Scaevola himself later indicated support for what Nasica had done.
82. *his toga over his head*: This probably marked out Nasica's action as sacral, one of several points suggesting that Nasica projected himself as ritually slaughtering an enemy of the Republic: these are discussed by J. Linderski, *Athenaeum* 90 (2002), 339–66, and A. Clark, *CQ* 57 (2007), 125–31.
83. *Publius Satureius ... Lucius Rufus ... noble exploit*: Nothing more is known of either Satureius or Rufus. *Rhet. ad Her.* 4.68 gives a particularly vivid and pathetic account of the killing of Tiberius: it looks as if the killer there is Nasica himself, an understandable rhetorical exaggeration.
84. *the first outbreak ... death of citizens*: Others too noted the significance of this first shedding of citizen blood: App. *Civil Wars* 1.2, 17, Vell. 2.3.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.11 oddly associates it with Gaius rather than Tiberius Gracchus. But Appian notes that the Coriolanus episode is an exception, for there was some Roman bloodshed then, as Plutarch's own *Coriolanus* makes clear (ch. 17). Plutarch's formulation 'was decided by' may be chosen to meet that point, as what ended that

dispute was not the bloodshed but the intervention of Coriolanus's womenfolk (*Cor.* 33–7).

85. *his brother's request to ... bury it at night*: This story is unlikely to be true: Gaius was presumably still away in Spain (ch. 13).
86. *threw it into the Tiber ... rest of the dead*: According to some authors it was an aedile, Lucretius Vespillo, who threw the bodies into the Tiber (*MRR* i.493, G–C, p. 9).
87. *Diophanes*: See ch. 8 and n. 36.
88. *Gaius Villius ... put to death in this way*: This is normally taken to be a reference to the punishment for parricides: the culprit was first whipped, then sewn into a sack with a snake and other animals (cocks, dogs and monkeys are mentioned), and finally thrown into the Tiber. The case is discussed by J. L. Beness, *Antichthon* 34 (2000), 1–17, who correctly observes that Plutarch's 'vessel' does not suggest a 'sack', and thinks that the parricidal penalty may in any case not have been introduced till 101 BCE. At all events, we know nothing more of Villius and hence cannot tell why he was singled out for such punishment.
89. *Blossius*: See ch. 8 and n. 36. According to Cicero (*Amic.* 37) and Val. Max. (4.7.1), this question-and-answer was not before the consuls but privately before Laelius (n. 35), and Blossius subsequently fled to Asia because he feared a new investigation.
90. *Aristonicus in Asia*: Perhaps the illegitimate son of Eumenes II of Pergamum, Aristonicus resented Attalus III's leaving the kingdom to Rome (n. 61), and led an insurrection in Asia Minor. He had some successes in 131 but was defeated by M. Perperna in 130 BCE, brought to Rome and executed (*MRR* i.500, 502; G–C, pp. 17–18, 19–20).
91. *Publius Crassus*: See n. 41, and for his place on the land-commission *MRR* i.495.
92. *Cornelius Nepos maintains*: Presumably in one of his series *Famous Men*: Peter prints this as fr. 9 (*HRR* ii.37). Plutarch quotes Nepos several times, and may well have known his work at first hand: it is disputed how far his own conception of biography was influenced by Nepos.
93. *that Brutus ... Lusitanians*: D. Iunius Brutus Callaicus, the consul of 138. His campaign in Spain began in his consulship and he continued it as proconsul for several years. His triumph was probably in 136 or 135 (*MRR* i.483, 485, 487, 494).
94. *send him to Asia*: In 132 BCE (*MRR* i.499). 'Although they had nothing for him to do there' is an exaggeration: his task was to organize the new province of Asia, probably along with four colleagues (*MRR* i.499).
95. *to keep him there*: Misleading: as the career of Julius Caesar was to

show, the position of pontifex maximus (unlike some of the lesser priesthoods) did not preclude long absences from Rome on campaign, and the pontifex maximus M. Aemilius Lepidus had campaigned in Liguria in 175 and served on an embassy in 170 (MRR i.401–2, 421). Indeed, Nasica's successor P. Crassus (n. 41) would also spend much of his brief time as pontifex maximus in Asia, arguing that it was his consular colleague L. Valerius Flaccus who, as priest of Mars, needed to stay in the city (Cic. *Phil.* 11.18, MRR i.500, 503).

96. *highest ... of the priesthoods*: Nasica had been pontifex maximus since about 141 BCE (MRR i.478), succeeding his father.
97. *Scipio Africanus the Younger*: I.e. Scipio Aemilianus (n. 7). At the end of the Life Plutarch reverts to a person who has been so important in Tiberius's earlier career (ch. 4), and echoes the theme of Scipio's distance from Tiberius's politics heralded in ch. 7. But Plutarch avoids endorsing Scipio's disapproval (Intro. *Gracch.*); he even deftly turns this to Tiberius's advantage, putting the accent more on the people's outrage.
98. *So may everyone perish who chooses to act in this way*: *Odyssey* 1.47, Athena's comment on the fate of Aegisthus, the murderer of Agamemnon. This is not the last we shall hear of the *Odyssey* (see C. *Gracch.* 12 and n. 61).
99. *Gaius ... Fulvius*: C. Gracchus and M. Fulvius Flaccus (n. 78).
100. *asked him before the assembly ... dead man's policies*: This exchange was doubtless in connection with Carbo's proposal in 131 to allow re-election to the tribunate (n. 70): Scipio declared that he thought Tiberius's death justified (*iure caesus*), perhaps adding 'if he genuinely wished to seize power over the state' (that presumably picks up the charge of tyrannical aspirations, n. 63): Livy *Perioche* 59, Cic. *De Or.* 2.106, etc., and (adding the important conditional clause) Vell. 2.4.4; G–C, pp. 20–21. That produced a clamour of protest, and Scipio retorted by abusing the crowd as mere 'step-children of Italy'.
101. *Life of Scipio*. Probably one of the opening pair of the series of Parallel Lives (n. 7).

Notes to Gaius Gracchus

1. *scarcely more than a boy*: Gaius was born in 154 or 153 BCE.
2. *nor was he interested in making money*: Perhaps originally drawn from his speech on his return from Sardinia (ch. 3), where the fragments quoted by Gellius (n. 12) show Gaius priding himself on his lack of luxury, his sexual restraint and his financial probity.

3. *Vettius*: Not otherwise known, unless he is one or other of two Vettii mentioned in the circle of the poet Lucilius.
4. *Dionysiac*: See *Ti. Gracch.* 10 and n. 48: the language here takes further that notion of Bacchic frenzy and the danger of loss of self-control. The reader already knows of Gaius's impassioned rhetorical style from *Ti. Gracch.* 2 (n. 8).
5. *Orestes*: L. Aurelius Orestes, the consul of 126 BCE. Gaius was quaestor in that year (*MRR* i.508).
6. *testimony of Cicero the orator*: *Cic. Div.* 1.36, who says that Gaius had the dream while a candidate for the quaestorship, and that the story was told by the historian Coelius Antipater. But Cicero's version simply has 'he would die the same death' as Tiberius: so also Val. Max. 1.7.6, presumably following Cicero. The elaboration – 'to live *and die* in the service of the people' – are likely to be Plutarch's own (see also next n. and nn. 68, 82).
7. *in many different fields*: This chapter replays many of the themes of *Ti. Gracch.* 4–6 – the promise shown on campaign, the appreciation of provincials, the mixed reception at Rome – giving firmer shape to that insight at the end of ch. 1 that 'Fate has decreed the same destiny for us ...', especially as Plutarch has reshaped it (n. 6). But now the worsened political atmosphere makes the response at Rome more suspicious and embittered.
8. *King Micipsa of Numidia*: The oldest son of Masinissa, who was father of Adherbal and Hiempsal and uncle of Jugurtha. The dynastic manoeuvrings after his death in 118 BCE play a major part in Sallust's *Jugurtha*.
9. *immediately embarked for Rome*: In 124 BCE.
10. *a quaestor*: Technically Gaius was probably a proquaestor (*MRR* i.511–12).
11. *serve for only ten*: The cavalry were available for service for ten, the infantry for sixteen years (*Ti. Gracch.* 16 and n. 71).
12. *gold and silver*: Gellius 15.12 quotes several passages from this speech, though he represents it as delivered before the people rather than to the censors: they include the remark on purses and wine-jars. Malcovati prints them as frs. 26–8 in *ORF* (see also n. 2).
13. *Fregellae*: An important colony some 70 miles south-east of Rome, which rebelled in 125 BCE, possibly because of the rejection of Fulvius Flaccus's proposal to grant it Roman citizenship (G–C, pp. 27–8). The rebellion was put down by Lucius Opimius, who was later to play such an important role in Gaius's downfall (ch. 11 and n. 55); he was then praetor (*MRR* i.510, *PRR*, pp. 220–21).
14. *an immense multitude ... no lodging*: A rare hint of the 'Italian strand' that is much more stressed by Appian (Intro.).

15. *support for Gaius*: Possibly Plutarch means just vocal support, or possibly he is imagining them shouting out their votes. Either way, the story is implausible, given the vast size of the Campus (600 acres) and given that it has few buildings except for temples (Badian, 'Tiberius Gracchus', p. 721).
16. *Genucius*: No such episode is mentioned in the context of various wars with Falerii in Livy's first decade. It may be that the story attached to the final war against Falerii in 241 BCE (*MRR* i.241 and 242, n.2); more likely it survived as a floating anecdote, useful for oratory but not firmly anchored in any historiographic tradition.
17. *Gaius Veturius ... forum*: Veturius is not otherwise known, and the story cannot be given any clear historical context.
18. '*But you stood by ... life was at stake*': For similar extended speeches of Tiberius see *Ti. Gracch.* 9, 15 and n. 44. Here too it is likely that they convey something of the substance and tone of Gaius's original: Gaius's speeches were read by Cicero and Gellius and were still available to be quoted by grammarians in late antiquity.
19. *prosecute ... without trial*: The central aspect of this important law was 'that no one should be condemned on a capital charge without the authorization of the people'. Plutarch's concentration on the consequences if the law was broken – 'empowered the people to prosecute any magistrate' – goes with his emphasis on the personal aspect, the targeting of Popillius Laenas.
20. *deposed from the tribunate*: *Ti. Gracch.* 10–12.
21. *supporters*: In 132 BCE, when P. Popillius Laenas was in fact consul rather than praetor (G–C, p. 13). (The Greek word is *strategos*, often used more generally of consuls and proconsuls as military 'commanders', but in this peacetime juridical setting it should mean 'praetor', so this does seem a mistake.) His co-consul P. Rupilius had also been involved, but was probably dead by now.
22. *his mother Cornelia*: Dio fr. 83.4 (the meaning of the Greek is not quite certain) may indicate that Octavius and Tiberius were related, and so Cornelia may have family reasons for her mercifulness. It may be that the law as a whole was not 'revoked', only its retrospective application to Octavius: Stockton, *Gracchi*, p. 116.
23. *statue ... 'Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi'*: The statue stood in the portico of Metellus (Pliny *Natural History* 34.32), and its base may be the one discovered in 1878 inscribed 'Cornelia daughter of Africanus, [mother of] the Gracchi'. The narrative here picks up a theme from *Ti. Gracch.* 8, where Cornelia had reproached her son for not yet being known as 'mother of the Gracchi'. If the barb

had ever been justified, it is no longer so (cf. ch. 19 and n. 89 for her dignified pride in her sons).

24. *his writings*: Gaius's writings were still circulating in Plutarch's day (n. 12), but Plutarch may here be indicating only that they were still available, not that he has consulted them himself; the sort of striking phrases he quotes could easily come from a biography or other historical source (Intro.).
25. *a number of laws ... undermine the authority of the senate*: The details of these laws and proposals are much discussed, and so is their chronology: for a survey see Stockton, *Gracchi*, pp. 114–161, 226–39. It is probable that in chs. 5 and 6 Plutarch includes in his round-up some measures to which he returns later in the narrative, for instance those concerning colonies and on the extension of citizenship (ch. 8).
26. *colonial settlements ... poor citizens*: For the colonies, see ch. 6 with n. 36, and ch. 8. There seems to have been some legislation beyond that authorizing the individual colonies, but it is uncertain how it related to Tiberius's law: Livy *Per.* 60 has Gaius introducing 'the same agrarian bill as his brother had done', and Vell. 2.6.3 mentions an upper limit on each citizen's holding of 500 *iugera* (i.e. the same as in Tiberius's measure, *Ti. Gracch.* 8 and n. 34). But it presumably stiffened, extended, or at least clarified that legislation in some ways, for the later agrarian law of 111 BCE (M. H. Crawford (ed.), *Roman Statutes i–ii*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement* 34 (1996), nr. 2) refers back to Gaius's law rather than Tiberius's.
27. *soldiers should be supplied ... seventeen*: An unfriendly treatment could describe this legislation as 'playing for the soldiers' favour by abandoning the rigour of the old training, so that he introduced disobedience and anarchy into the constitution' (Diod. 34.25.1). That perhaps suggests that there was more to it than Plutarch here suggests (Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, p. 401, n. 4, suggests that Gaius reduced the length of service as Tiberius had proposed, *Ti. Gracch.* 16 and n. 71), but the criticisms may just be hostile exaggeration.
28. *the same voting rights ... enjoyed by Roman citizens*: This is normally taken to be a proposal of 122 BCE to extend Roman citizenship to those who had hitherto had Latin rights, as App. *Civil Wars* 1.23.99 puts it (more precisely than Plutarch's 'Italians'), while the rest of the allies were to receive Latin rights; Plutarch comes back to this measure in chs. 8 and 12. Quotations survive from speeches of Gaius giving gruesome illustrations of the arrogant treatment meted out to Italians by Roman magistrates and officers (*ORF* frs. 47–9), and these speeches were

presumably delivered in support of one phase or another of his citizenship proposals.

29. *grain ... sold to the poor*: According to App. *Civil Wars* 1.21.89 this was the first of Gaius's measures. Grain was to be sold to citizens at $6\frac{1}{3}$ asses a *modius*: there had previously been occasional one-off distributions, but usually the price had been left to be fixed by the market. The granaries mentioned in ch. 6 (n. 38) were clearly associated with this measure. On Gaius's law and its background see P. Garnsey and D. Rathbone, *JRS* 75 (1985), 20–25.
30. *appointment of jurymen*: The court in question (at least the court that mattered most) was the 'permanent court for extortion cases' (*quaestio perpetua de repetundis*), established in 149 BCE. Several acquittals of blatant wrongdoers had been embarrassing to the senate: App. *Civil Wars* 1.22 lists the cases of L. Aurelius Cotta in 138, of a certain Salinator, and of M'. Aquillius, proconsul of Asia. The last case took place only shortly before 123, as Aquillius had returned from Asia in 126. Besides revising the juries, Gaius's legislation greatly increased the penalties for extortion.
31. *the whole six hundred*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.22 says that the courts were transferred altogether to the knights, and several other sources agree (Varro *de vita populi Romani* fr. 114, Vell. 2.6.3, Tac. *Ann.* 12.60, Diod. 34.25.1 etc.: G–C, pp. 34–5). Livy *Per.* 60 has a confused notice which probably suggests a mix of 600 knights and 300 senators. There are various ways of reconciling the discrepancies (perhaps one version was an earlier, one a later proposal; perhaps there was a 300:300 mix in some other courts, but senators were excluded from extortion cases as they would be sitting in judgement on fellow-senators; perhaps the 600:300 mix version is correct, which could easily be simplified to 'the knights gaining control' and could equally easily be misunderstood by Plutarch or his source). But one strand and/or another in our tradition may simply be mistaken.
32. *turning towards the forum ... this procedure*: But according to Cic. *Amic.* 96, the first person to face in this direction was not Gaius but C. Licinius Crassus, the tribune of 145.
33. *orators ... not to the senate*: Such things mattered: at Athens in 403, the 'Thirty Tyrants' turned the rostrum in the assembly so that it faced inland rather than to the sea (*Them.* 19).
34. *almost monarchical powers*: This recalls the attacks on Tiberius for seeking autocratic power, *Ti. Gracch.* 14–15 and n. 64. Those attacks were unfair; the position with Gaius is evidently more complex. But after Tiberius's fate the dangers to Gaius of such 'monarchical powers' are also clear.
35. *Quintus Fabius*: Probably Q. Fabius Maximus (*MRR* i.514). This

setback did not prevent him from being elected consul for 121 BCE.

36. *founding of colonies*: Esp. Junonia, on the site of the former Carthage (ch. 10), and Tarentum and Capua (ch. 9); we hear also of a colony at Scolacium, and there were probably more (Stockton, *Gracchi*, pp. 132–6; G–C, pp. 38–9).
37. *construction of roads*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.23 similarly stresses Gaius's road-programme. Had the citizenship proposal succeeded (ch. 5 and n. 28), they would have made it easier for Italians to come to Rome and vote, but the advantages to the Italian economy went well beyond this.
38. *establishment of public granaries*: Doubtless to store corn for the public distributions (ch. 5 and n. 29).
39. *Fannius*: Probably identified by Plutarch with the historian (*Ti. Gracch.* 4 and n. 24).
40. *tribune for the second time*: For 122 BCE.
41. *entirely to the people's enthusiasm*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.21 refers to a recent law allowing the people to elect anyone they chose if there were insufficient candidates for the tribunate. That is hard to believe, but may be a garbling of a measure allowing such an election if candidates failed to carry the votes of sufficient tribes. In any case, Gaius and/or his supporters may have seen the advantages of stage-managing such an irregular election, seeing the political capital Gaius would accrue from such acclaim.
42. *Tarentum and Capua*: See n. 36.
43. *to the Latins*: See ch. 5 and n. 28.
44. *Livius Drusus*: M. Livius Drusus, tribune in 122 BCE (*MRR* i.517) and the future consul of 112. His services were so appreciated by the senate that he was acclaimed as 'patron of the senate' (Suet. *Tiberius* 3). App. *Civil Wars* 1.23 suggests that Drusus vetoed at least some of Gaius's measures as well as making counter-proposals of his own.
45. *demagogues in a comedy*: Plutarch evidently has in mind Aristophanes' *Knights*, a work he quotes or alludes to about a dozen times elsewhere.
46. *three thousand of the poorest citizens to each*: For Livius's programme cf. *MRR* i.517.
47. *pay a small rent to the public treasury*: This may mark a change from the scheme of Tiberius, whose grants apparently gave outright possession rather than leasehold tenure; if so, it was a reversion to something like the pre-133 position, where the landholders (of course, often holders of much bigger estates) paid a 'small rent' (*Ti. Gracch.* 8).
48. *When Rubrius ... introduced a bill*: Possibly in 123, possibly in 122

BCE. The sequence of Plutarch's account seems to favour 122, when Drusus was already active, but 'twenty-three years earlier' points to 123 (see next n.), and that is more plausible historically (MRR iii.182, correcting i.157): if so, this will be another case where Plutarch is reprising a measure he has already mentioned more vaguely (nn. 25 and 36). This time there were to be six thousand colonists, drawn according to App. *Civil Wars* 1.24 from all over Italy.

49. *twenty-three years earlier*: In 146 BCE. The ground where the walls stood had then been ploughed up and the restoration of the city forbidden by Scipio's solemn imprecation.
50. *Fulvius Flaccus*: See *Ti. Gracch.* 18 with n. 78: most unusually, even though he was an ex-consul Fulvius had become tribune in 122 BCE in order to help the programme. According to App. *Civil Wars* 1.24 Fulvius accompanied Gaius to Carthage. Despite e.g. MRR i.417, that is not incompatible with Plutarch's notice here: if Fulvius's conduct had already been controversial, Drusus may have chosen it as his target at this stage even – perhaps especially – if Fulvius too was temporarily out of Italy. But Plutarch himself does seem to have assumed that Fulvius remained at home (ch. 11 and n. 54).
51. *described in his Life*: Probably one of the first pair of the series: see *Ti. Gracch.* 1 and n. 7 there, and for Scipio's disapproval of Tiberius's actions *Ti. Gracch.* 21 with n. 96.
52. *several years earlier*: In 129 BCE (G–C, pp. 21–3). Plutarch is the only source to suggest any rumours that Gaius had been implicated, though Cicero several times refers to suspicion attaching to Carbo, another of the land-commissioners (*Ti. Gracch.* 21 with n. 100, MRR i.505), and Cornelia and Sempronia were also suspected (App. *Civil Wars* 1.20 etc.: see *Ti. Gracch.* 1 with n. 3, A. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (1967), p. 241). If Gaius had really been widely suspected, we should expect this to be mentioned in at least one of the Cicero passages. Plutarch may have been misled by a source that referred to 'Gaius' (meaning C. Carbo) in the way that Cicero does in a letter to Paetus (*Ad Fam.* 9.21.3).
53. *travelled to Africa*: In 122 BCE.
54. *hard pressed by Drusus*: This certainly makes it sound as if Fulvius was still in Italy (ch. 10 and n. 50).
55. *a leading member of the senate*: Opimius had crushed the Fregellae rebellion as praetor in 125 (ch. 3 and n. 13). His most prominent historical role was in the events which Plutarch goes on to narrate here. For his later life see ch. 18 and n. 86.
56. *promoted the campaign of Fannius*: In mid-123 BCE, in the elections

for the consulship of 122 (ch. 8).

57. *a great multitude ... to support him*: Another hint of the 'Italian strand' (cf. Intro. and ch. 3 with n. 14).
58. *not Roman by birth*: The legislation in question was that concerning the extension of citizenship and Latin rights (chs. 5 and 8, with n. 28). Those not entitled to vote were not to come within five miles (App. *Civil Wars* 1.23).
59. *promised ... his support if they refused to leave the city*: That is, he would intervene as tribune, and his sacrosanctity would guarantee their protection: Lintott, *Constitution*, pp. 125–6.
60. *Fannius's lictors*: Fannius had by now come out firmly against the law: Cicero mentions a speech that he delivered against it (*Brut.* 99).
61. *gloom*: A reference to the weird laughter of the suitors at *Odyssey* 20.345–57: the seer Theoclymenus then warns them of his vision of a hall full of blood and lamentation and darkness, with the sun leaving the heavens as their souls hasten to Hades. The *Odyssey*, so crushingly quoted by Scipio Aemilianus against Tiberius (*Ti. Gracch.* 21 with n. 98), can be used against either side.
62. *Opimius's election as consul*: For 121 BCE (*MRR* i.520).
63. *repeal many of his laws*: It seems in fact that the crucial assembly had been called to repeal only one law, that authorizing the foundation of Carthage (ch. 10 and n. 48). Others may well have been repealed later, after Gaius's death.
64. *recruiting ... to oppose the consul*: We are by now in 121 BCE, when Opimius was already consul. Here, as at the end of both *Ti. Gracch.* (ch. 17 and n. 76) and *C.Gr.* (ch. 18 and n. 87), there is a narrative rhythm which is also found in *Caes.*, where again we have a popular figure who tries to be moderate but is largely destroyed by the excesses and misjudgements of his friends (*Caes.* 51). Diod. 34.28a gives a version that makes Gaius much more intemperately violent.
65. *letters to her son*: Plutarch does not claim to have seen these at first hand: these arrangements *are said to be* hinted at (or perhaps 'given in code'). Some excerpts from Cornelia's letters (*Ti. Gracch.* 1 and n. 3) are quoted in the manuscripts of Nepos: Peter prints them at *HRR* ii.38–40, and they are translated by S. Dixon, *Cornelia: Mother of the Gracchi* (2007), pp. 26–7. Those excerpts appear to be urging moderation on Gaius, but Dixon is right to regard their authenticity as very dubious.
66. *one of his attendants, Quintus Antyllius*: Other sources variously make Antyllius (or Antyllus) a private citizen (Appian), a herald or announcer (*praeco*: Orosius) and a kinsman (Diod.).
67. *preserve ... put down the tyrants*: This was the so-called *senatus*

consultum ultimum ('ultimate decree of the senate'), which regularly included the phrase 'that the consuls should see to it that the state suffers no harm', though the detail of the formulation altered according to the particular crisis (hence 'to put down the tyrants' here might conceivably have figured in the decree, though such passages as Cic. *Phil.* 8.14 suggest that this is Plutarch's own elaboration). The effect was to encourage the use of extra-constitutional force. Still, its full legal implications remained unclear: this was already the case with Opimius (Cic. *De Or.* 2.132, 165, 169–70), and he was put on trial but acquitted in 120 BCE (*MRR* i.523, G–C, pp. 50–51). The same issue led to highly politicized wranglings after the execution of the Catilinarians in 63 BCE.

68. *spent the night outside his door*: Exactly as Tiberius's supporters had guarded him on his last, tense night, *Ti. Gracch.* 16. Events are indeed replaying themselves (cf. nn. 6 and 7).
69. *victory won ... during his consulship*: In 125 BCE (*MRR* i.510; G–C, p. 28). The campaign was fought against some tribes in south-eastern Gaul: Fulvius, so it was said, had been sent on it to divert him from his agrarian agitation (App. *Civil Wars* 1.34).
70. *the Aventine Hill*: The Aventine was of symbolic significance as well as of strategic value, as it had variously been associated with the plebs, 'a cosmopolitan centre of popular politics' (*OCD*³ s.v.). See C. Edwards, *Writing Rome* (1996), p. 22.
71. *his wife*: Licinia (*Ti. Gracch.* 21).
72. *her brother Crassus's house*: We hear nothing more of this brother, which is odd for a member of so noble a family. Perhaps he died young.
73. *his younger son*: The boy's name was Quintus (App.), and he was not yet eighteen (Vell.). For his hapless fate see ch. 17.
74. *disused bath*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.26 says it was 'a workshop of a well-known man', Orosius 5.12.8 'a private house'.
75. *Temple of Diana*: On the Aventine, close to where the fracas was taking place (ch. 15 and n. 70). This cult of Diana had originally been associated with the Latin league (Livy 1.45), and Gaius's policy of favouring the Latin allies (n. 28) lent extra emblematic significance to this choice of refuge.
76. *Pomponius ... Licinius*: Pomponius was a Roman knight, and probably the addressee of the pamphlet mentioned in *Ti. Gracch.* 8. 'Licinius' seems to be a mistake for Laetorius, the name given in most other authors, and Plutarch perhaps confused him with Gaius's slave 'Licinius' of *Ti. Gracch.* 2.
77. *openly changing sides*: Once the fracas was over the people sacked the house of Fulvius (Cic. *De Domo* 102), and perhaps that of

Gaius too (App. *Civil Wars* 1.26).

78. *wooden bridge over the Tiber*: The Pons Sublicius, Rome's oldest bridge, and the scene of the famous defence by Horatius Cocles and his two colleagues Sp. Larcius and T. Herminius against Lars Porsenna (Popl. 16, Livy 2.10). That episode is clearly recalled by the loyal protection his two friends here offer Gaius, and Val. Max. 4.7.2 even has Laetorius emulate Horatius's legendary leap into the Tiber; but Gaius will end in the river in a much less glorious way. The various versions of the fighting are discussed by J. L. Beness and T. W. Hillard, *CQ* 51 (2001), 135–40.
79. *Philocrates*: Some versions give his name as 'Euporus'.
80. *a grove ... sacred to the Furies*: The Lucus Fur(r)inae, on the slopes of the Janiculum. The connection with the Furies was already made by Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* 3.46), though it seems to be marked by him as controversial ('this is my interpretation ...').
81. *Septimuleius*: A man from Anagnia, according to Cic. *De Or.* 2.269; and a friend to this point, not of Opimius as here, but of Gaius himself, according to Val. Max. 9.4.3 and others.
82. *thrown into the Tiber*: As that dream foretold (ch. 1 and n. 6), the brothers' fates had been all too similar. But another version held that Gaius's headless body was restored to his mother at Misenum (Orosius 5.12.9). Vell. 2.6.7 agrees with Plutarch.
83. *Temple of Concord*: In 367 BCE, M. Camillus had built a Temple of Concord to celebrate the reconciliation of patricians and plebeians (*Camillus* 42, Ovid *Fasti* 1.637–50). It was this that Opimius now restored, also building a basilica. The temple stood at the north-west corner of the forum.
84. *Discord*: In Latin the play may have been on the two words *Concordia* and *vecordia* (madness): P. Stadter in R. Waterfield (tr.), *Plutarch: Roman Lives* (1999), p 458.
85. *a triumph*: See n. 69.
86. *he accepted bribes from him*: In 117 or 116 BCE (*MRR* i.530–31): Sall. *Jug.* 16 also writes of bribery. After a bill introduced by the tribune C. Mamilius, Opimius was prosecuted and condemned in 109 (Sall. *Jug.* 40, *MRR* i.546). He died in exile at Dyrrhachium.
87. *showed ... longed for the Gracchi*: Here again (cf. ch. 13 and n. 64) the rhythm is similar to the end of *Caesar*: there too popular support is shaken during the final days but the enthusiasm bursts out again after the man's death (*Caes.* 56, 60–62, 68).
88. *Misenum*: Misenum was at the northern tip of the bay of Naples, a favourite area for the villas of wealthy Romans. On this house see J. H. d'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples* (1970), pp. 23–30, 176–7. It was later owned by Marius and by Lucullus: at *Mar.* 34 Plutarch comments on the steep rise in its price as it passed from

one owner to the next. It may well have been the same villa, as extended by Lucullus, that eventually passed to the emperor Tiberius: he died there (Tac. *Ann.* 6.50 etc.). It was Lucullus with whom it was normally most associated: A. M. Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (2005), p. 65.

89. *admired most ... early days of Rome*: Others too recalled Cornelia as an exemplar of dignity in bereavement: Seneca twice (*Consolatio ad Marciam* 16 and *Consolatio ad Helviam* 16) tells of her response to those who expressed sympathy, 'I will never count myself anything other than fortunate, for I was mother of the Gracchi.' Cornelia's dignity invites comparison with that of the Spartan mothers Agesistrata (*Agis* 20) and Cratesicleia (*Cleom.* 22) in the parallel Lives.
90. *to endure it with equanimity*: At the end of the Gracchi, Plutarch's reflections on virtue recall the contrast of true and false virtue with which he had begun *Agis* (Intro.).

Notes to the Comparison of Agis, Cleomenes and the Gracchi

1. *Agis ... property*: *Agis* 9.
2. *The Gracchi ... three hundred knights*: *C. Gracch.* 6–7 (road-building), *C. Gracch.* 6, 9–10 (colonies) and *C. Gracch.* 5 (juries).
3. *in Plato's words*: The reference is to Plato *Republic* 4. 426e, and the well-informed reader might recall the Platonic context: he is there contrasting the true statesman with his false counterpart who flatters the people and is flattered by them, and introduces measures which he thinks might do good but in fact are hopelessly piecemeal. This therefore recalls the themes of true and false leadership aired at the beginning of *Agis* (Intro.). 'Cutting off the hydra's heads' was proverbially pointless because two heads would spring up for every one that was lost: in legend Heracles killed the Lernaean Hydra by telling his companion Iolaus to cauterize each smashed head to prevent the new ones from growing. Similar radical measures were evidently necessary now, or so Agis thought.
4. *Lycurgus ... Delphi*: *Lycurgus* 6.
5. *Numantia ... no other hope of escape*: *Ti. Gracch.* 5–7.
6. *Numantia ... Sardinia*: *C. Gracch.* 2.
7. *Agesilaus ... land-division*: *Agis* 13, 16.
8. *When it would have been easy ... to remove them*: *Cleom.* 7–8. The narrative itself did not suggest that it would have been so easy to bring over the ephors without violence.

9. *more concerned ... than to avoid harm himself*: C. Gracch. 14–17.
10. *expelling his colleague ... second tribunate for himself*: Ti. Gracch. 11–12, 16.
11. *Antyllus ... despite his protests*: C. Gracch. 13–14.
12. *gave freedom to all the slaves*: Cleom. 23.
13. *Eucleidas ... to be his colleague*: Cleom. 11.
14. *the accusation ... in the murder*: Cleom. 5. Again, this was not the emphasis of the narrative itself, which did not mention any reluctance of Cleomenes to investigate Archidamus's death.
15. *Charilaus ... inherit the throne*: Lycurgus 3.
16. *excess of ambition, nothing else*: The language plays on the prophecy that Sparta would be destroyed by 'an excess of greed, nothing else' (*Sayings of the Spartans* 239f, etc.): Agis 9 alludes to it too.
17. *You can see for yourself ... what I have said*: This 'you' echoes and mirrors a similar 'you' at the beginning of the double pair at Agis 2 (Intro.). Probably it should be taken as an address to Q. Sosius Senecio, the distinguished consular who was the addressee of the whole series (as is assumed for instance by C. P. Jones, *JRS* 56 (1966), 69 = B. Scardigli (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (1995), pp. 113–14), but possibly it is a more generalized address to any reader, especially if Sosius was already dead (he died probably before 116 CE).

SERTORIUS

Further Reading

The Greek text of *Sertorius* is now equipped with a first-rate commentary by C. F. Konrad (1994): this will often be referred to in the notes here, and may be consulted for fuller information on many issues. My own notes are heavily indebted to Konrad, especially on matters of topography (especially tricky in this Life). P. O. Spann's *Quintus Sertorius and the Legacy of Sulla* (1987) is the first book-length study since A. Schulten's German *Sertorius* (1926). For a good, brief account of the war with Sertorius see R. Seager in *CAH* ix₂ (1994), pp. 215–21; on the Spanish background see A. W. Lintott in the same volume, pp. 20–23. On the fragments of Sallust's *Histories* see the commentary by P. McGushin (Books 1–2, 1992; Books 3–4, 1994): inevitably many of his Sertorian notes are concerned with Plutarch as well as Sallust. The collection *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (ed. P. Stadter, 1992) contains two chapters of interest: A. B. Bosworth's 'History and artifice in Plutarch's *Eumenes*' (pp. 56–89) is the fullest exploration of the *Sertorius–Eumenes* comparison; and L. A. García

Moreno writes on 'Paradoxography and political ideals in Plutarch's Life of Sertorius' (pp. 132–58).

Notes to the Introduction to Sertorius

1. From *Mar.* 29 (see *Luc.* n. 2).
2. Christopher Gill interestingly compares Plutarch's and Tacitus's analysis of character-change in *CQ* 33 (1983), 469–87: Sertorius and Tiberius are among his prime examples (see n. 64).
3. Or so I argue: Pelling, *P&H*, p. 357.
4. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 260, stresses how rarely the *Comparisons* express an explicit preference: he counts *Solon–Poplicola* as the clearest instance, where Plutarch unexpectedly favours Poplicola. This one, though, is almost as clear.
5. Plutarch's reading of Roman politics in this Life accordingly accentuates the unpleasant and the personal. Sertorius's partisanship in the civil war is not fitted into anything like his usual few-against-many categories (General Intro. IV); it is the gruesomeness and incompetence of the principals that is stressed, including Sertorius's own unsatisfactory associates (chs. 5–6). Unreliable comradeships come back to destroy Sertorius himself at the end (chs. 15, 25–6). If Sertorius yearns to get away from it all, we can understand it: that 'it all' is here even more nasty than usual.
6. So R. Syme, *Sallust* (1964), pp. 203–5, reasonably objecting to the assumption that Plutarch's texturing simply reflects Sallust's, but representing Plutarch's picture as simpler than it is. On the use of Sallust see esp. Konrad, pp. xlv–v, liii; for other possible sources, Konrad, pp. liii–lvi, and for a possible use of Juba see n. 60 below.
7. So E. Gabba, *Appiano e la Storia delle Guerre Civili* (1956), pp. 89–101.
8. Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 145–6.

Notes to Sertorius

1. *two men named Attis ... killed by a wild boar*: The story of the first Attis is told by Pausanias 7.17.9: he was a Lydian (other versions of the myth make him a Phrygian, and he is certainly more usually located in western Asia Minor than in 'Syria', as here) who introduced the cult of the Great Mother to his country, and was so widely revered as a result that Zeus became jealous and sent a boar to kill him. The second, Arcadian Attis, is otherwise unknown.

2. *two Actaeons ... by his lovers*: The first Actaeon was the legendary huntsman who caught sight of Artemis bathing, was changed into a stag, and devoured by his own hounds. The second was a young man beloved by Archias of Corinth, who tried to abduct him. His friends resisted, and in the struggle Actaeon was torn to pieces. The story is told in the ps.-Plutarchan *Love Stories* 772e–f.
3. *two Scipios ... in the Third*: The first is P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maior ('Scipio Africanus'), consul in 205 and 194, who won the battle of Zama in 202 BCE to win the Second Punic War; the second is P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus ('Scipio Aemilianus', *Ti. Gracch.* 1 and n. 7), consul in 147 and 134, who took and destroyed Carthage in 146 BCE.
4. *the city of Troy ... closing them quickly enough*: Three equine falls of Troy: 1. Heracles saved Laomedon's daughter Hesione from a sea-monster, but Laomedon failed to pay the promised reward of the divine horses that Zeus had given him in return for Ganymede. 2. The famous Trojan War. 3. Charidemus was a real-life mercenary general who besieged and took Troy around 360 BCE. According to Aeneas Tacticus 24.3–8 and Polyaeus 3.17 the role of the horse was different: a traitor was bringing a horse through the gates, which meant they had to be fully opened rather than just using the wicket, and this gave the attacking force their chance. (It is possible that Plutarch's Greek means that the horse 'charged' the gate rather than slipped in the gateway, but that is still different from the other versions.)
5. *Philip of Macedon, Antigonus, Hannibal*: Respectively Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander; Antigonus Monophthalmus, prominent in the Wars of the Successors after Alexander's death and a major figure in Plutarch's *Life* of his son Demetrius as well as in *Eumenes*, the pair to *Sertorius*; Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general of the Second Punic War and Scipio Africanus's antagonist at Zama (n. 3). The last comparison will later gain extra point: ch. 23 and n. 114. Plutarch was not the only one to revel in such comparisons, for in 69–70 CE the one-eyed Gallic rebel Iulius Civilis would 'pass himself off as a Sertorius or a Hannibal because of the similar disfigurement of his face' (*Tac. Hist.* 4.13).
6. *Eumenes of Cardia*: 362/1–316 BCE, secretary to Philip II and Alexander, and another significant player in the Wars of the Successors until he was executed by Antigonus (n. 5) in 316. His *Life* will be included in the revised Penguin Classic *Age of Alexander*.
7. *family of some distinction*: This suggests the sort of person whom Cicero often describes as 'nobles in their own towns' (*domi*

nobiles). See Konrad's note: before he became a senator Sertorius presumably belonged to the equestrian order.

8. *Nursia*: Modern Norcia.
9. *carefully brought up by his widowed mother*: As was another great military man who could be regarded as a renegade, Coriolanus: in *Cor.*, esp. ch. 4, Plutarch develops more psychological interest in tracing that theme (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 309–11). *Coriolanus and Alcibiades* probably belongs close to *Sertorius and Eumenes* in the sequence of the *Lives*' writing, and Plutarch and his audience may have been alert to the parallel. In this *Life* the theme recurs with the mother's death in ch. 22.
10. *a certain reputation in the city*: It is uncertain whether Plutarch means Nursia, as Konrad thinks, or (more likely) Rome.
11. *his eloquence ... little more than a boy*: Cf. Cicero's verdict (*Brut.* 180): 'Of all the orators – perhaps I should say rabble-rousers – in my knowledge who were wholly untrained, country-style rather than urban sophisticates, I think the most fluent speaker and the most intelligent was Quintus Sertorius ...'
12. *the Cimbri and the Teutones broke into Gaul*: Plutarch describes the background to the invasion at *Mar.* 11, and goes on to give a vivid description of the war (*Mar.* 12–17).
13. *under Caepio ... the Romans ... routed*: At the battle of Arausio in 105 BCE, when the proconsul Q. Servilius Caepio was thought to be mainly responsible for the defeat: *MRR* i.557, G–C, pp. 83–4.
14. *still carrying ... his breastplate*: The exploit was still remembered over 450 years later (Ammianus Marcus 24.6.7), but 'still carrying his shield and his breastplate' is hard to believe.
15. *a new offensive*: In 102 BCE, when Marius defeated the Teutones and Ambrones near Aquae Sextiae (Aix-en-Provence) but Q. Lutatius Catulus was beaten by the Cimbri: *Mar.* 18–23, *MRR* i.567, G–C, pp. 97–8. The decisive battle was fought the following year at Vercellae.
16. *likely to need for a simple conversation*: The notion that such a smattering might pass muster with any native speaker may be less implausible if, as Konrad suggests, Sertorius was posing as a Gaul among Germans.
17. *was sent to Spain ... under ... general Didius*: In 97 BCE (*MRR* ii.7–8). T. Didius went as consul to Farther Spain in 98 and continued as proconsul until returning to a triumph in 93: *MRR* ii.4, 15, etc., and iii.81.
18. *Castulo ... Celtiberians*: Castulo, on the northern bank of the Guadalimar. 'Celtiberians' is probably a mistake, for the city was Iberian (Konrad). Notice the detachment with which Plutarch describes an act of what could easily be seen as Roman brutality.

19. *Gyriseni*: The word is here uncertain in the text.
20. *quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul*: Sertorius's quaestorship was probably in 91 BCE, possibly in 90 (Konrad and *MRR* iii.193).
21. *the Marsic War*: So-called because the Marsi gave a lead to the other Italian peoples, it is also known as the 'Social War', i.e. 'the war against the allies' (which is what Plutarch calls it at *Mar.* 32). The Italian allies revolted when, after the assassination of the tribune M. Livius Drusus in 91 (*MRR* ii.21), they found themselves deprived of the prospect of obtaining the franchise by constitutional means. Sallust's description of Sertorius's role is so similar that Plutarch is presumably using that as his source (*Hist.* 1.88 M. = 77 McG., cf. Intro. *Sert.*): 'Under the command of Titus Didius in Spain he covered himself in glory as a military tribune. In the Marsic War he made himself very useful in the preparation of troops and weaponry; and yet many achievements carried out under his command were left unrecorded, principally because he was not a noble, thus arousing the spite of historians' (tr. McGushin). Sallust goes on to mention the disfigurements and the loss of an eye (next n.).
22. *always prided himself*: Sallust *Hist.* 1.88 M. = 77 McG. is again probably Plutarch's source, even though it makes a different point: 'Far from being worried about his disfigurements, he took the greatest delight in them in so far as he was keeping, to his greater glory, the rest of his body intact'. Plutarch's detail – 'necklaces and spears and crowns', etc. – may well be his own elaboration.
23. *stood for the tribuneship*: Either in 88 BCE, for the tribunate of 87, or in 89 for 88 (see Konrad).
24. *Marius was defeated by Sulla*: In 88 BCE (*MRR* ii.40, G–C, pp. 163–4). Plutarch describes the fighting in *Mar.* 35 and *Sull.* 8–9.
25. *campaign against Mithridates*: Sulla set out against Mithridates in spring 87 BCE (*Sull.* 11–12, *MRR* ii.48, G–C, p. 178).
26. *two consuls then in office*: Cn Octavius and L. Cornelius Cinna (*MRR* ii.45–6).
27. *doing his utmost ... Marius's faction*: A vague reference to Cinna's proposal to distribute the freshly enfranchised Italians among all thirty-five tribes instead of limiting them to eight (G–C, pp. 171–2); this would greatly increase their influence.
28. *after losing nearly ten thousand men*: 'The whole place was awash with citizen blood and piles of bodies', Cic. *Cat.* 3.24, cf. Cic. *Sest.* 77. App. *Civil Wars* 1.63 describes the fighting.
29. *sailed home from Libya*: *Mar.* 41.
30. *violent and vindictive temper*: Plutarch develops this characterization in *Mar.* itself, especially its closing chapters.

31. *since he himself had invited Marius to join them*: Yet at *Mar.* 41 Plutarch has Marius offering his support on his own initiative; so also, rather less clearly, *App. Civil Wars* 1.67; other sources mainly state or imply that Cinna did summon Marius (*Vell.* 2.20.5, etc.).
32. *When the fighting was over*: Plutarch passes quickly over the fighting of 87 BCE. *App. Civil Wars* 1.66–70 gives a full account, and Plutarch too knew more than he here says (*Mar.* 42). For the moment, it is the way that Sertorius contrasts with the other Marian commanders in bloodthirstiness that interests Plutarch, not the way that he combines with them to win victory.
33. *every kind of insolence and cruelty*: More details at *Mar.* 43–5.
34. *to use his power more moderately*: Thus Plutarch seeks to dissociate Sertorius from the excesses of Cinna's regime. He may well have known more of Sertorius's activities between 86 and 83, and suppressed them as embarrassing: so Konrad, p. 65. Sallust gave a full account of that period in the *Histories*.
35. *This gang numbered no fewer than four thousand*: These slaves were known as the Bardyaeans: Plutarch describes their outrages and this outcome at *Mar.* 43–4, where he makes Cinna and Sertorius jointly responsible for killing them.
36. *Marius died ... Cinna was killed*: Marius died in January 86, and Cinna was murdered by his own troops in early 84 BCE (*Pomp.* 5, *MRR* ii.60, G–C, pp. 189–90).
37. *making himself consul*: In 82 BCE even though he was only twenty-six or twenty-seven years old. He was besieged and died at Praeneste in the same year (*MRR* ii.60, G–C, pp. 207–8). *Mar.* 46 describes his unlikeable qualities.
38. *Carbo, Norbanus and Scipio*: Cn. Papirius Carbo (consul in 85, 84 and 82), C. Norbanus (consul in 83 and probably proconsul in 82) and L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus (consul in 83). Plutarch here telescopes together several campaigns and battles of 83 and 82 (*Sull.* 27–32, *MRR* ii.62–3, 66, 69–70); they culminated in Sulla's arrival in Rome and victory at the battle of the Colline Gate in late 82.
39. *subverting his opponent's troops*: *Sull.* 28; the episode was described in similar terms – the 'corruption' of Scipio's army – by Sallust (*Hist.* 1 fr. 91 M. = 81 McG.). Despite 'finally', this belongs in summer 83, before some of the events mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. *App. Civil Wars* 1.85 tells of another exploit of his under Scipio's command, grasping an opportunity to take Suessa Aurunca. He is normally thought to have been praetor in this year (*MRR* ii.63), but an earlier date, perhaps 85, is more likely (so Konrad, pp. 74–6; cf. *PRR*, p. 503, *MRR* iii.193).

40. *set out for Spain*: In winter 83–2 BCE. Plutarch is right about his title of ‘proconsul’, but it is not clear what he was proconsul of: perhaps both Nearer and Farther Spain, perhaps only Nearer.
41. *greed and insolence of the officials ... sent out to them*: See General Intro. I on Plutarch’s sensitivity to Roman governors’ abuse of their power and to the ill will this caused.
42. *taxes imposed on the people*: Sallust described similarly the ways that Sertorius made himself popular: *Hist.* 1 fr. 94 M. = 83 McG. with note.
43. *billeting his soldiers upon them*: *Sull.* 25 gives an idea of the hardship that such billeting could have imposed; the resentment it caused is again mentioned at ch. 24.
44. *the cause of Marius and Carbo was lost*: In 82 BCE (n. 38). Immediately after the battle of the Colline Gate the first of Sulla’s proscription lists was published, and Sertorius’s name was on it.
45. *Livius Salinator*: The campaign (81 BCE) was described by Sallust (*Hist.* 1 fr. 96 M. = 84 McG.).
46. *Gaius Annius*: Proconsul in one or (more probably) both of the Spanish provinces in 81 BCE (*MRR* iii.15).
47. *Calpurnius, surnamed Lanarius*: Nothing else secure is known about him: it is not even clear whether he was one of Salinator’s own men or not (‘assassinated’ could refer either to treachery or to a surreptitious infiltration of the camp).
48. *New Carthage*: Modern Cartagena.
49. *pirate ships from Cilicia*: *Pomp.* 24–6 gives a survey of Mediterranean piracy, especially associated with Cilicia, and of the measures Pompey took against it in 67 BCE.
50. *Pityussa*: The larger of the two Pityussian islands is the modern Ibiza. Sallust described the naval battle (*Hist.* 1 frs. 98–9 M. = 87–8 McG.).
51. *straits of Gades*: Straits of Gibraltar.
52. *Baetis*: Modern Guadalquivir.
53. *given its name to the neighbouring parts of Spain*: I.e. ‘Baetica’, the name given by Augustus to the province that had hitherto been Farther Spain, along with some adjustment of its boundaries.
54. *Atlantic islands*: Opinion is divided on whether these were the Canaries, or Madeira and Porto Santo.
55. *made famous in the Odyssey*: Homer describes these ‘Isles of the Blest’ at *Odyssey* 4.563–8: ‘life there is easier for mortals than anywhere else on earth: there is no snow, no deep winter, no storms; Ocean sends the pleasant western breezes to cool mankind ...’ Plutarch’s language here echoes that description (hence attempts to identify these ‘Atlantic islands’ through their climate are ill-directed), though he rationalizes the meteorology.

The theme seems intrusive in the hard world of late Republican politics, but again it figured in Sallust's *Histories* (1 frs. 100–103 M. = 89–91 McG.). Konrad suggests that it may go back to Sertorius's own manipulation of his public image, playing to Celtic beliefs in western islands of the dead.

56. *restore Ascalis ... to the throne of Mauretania*: Plutarch is our only source for these events of 81 or 80 BCE, though Sallust may have described them (*Hist.* 1 fr. 104 M. = fr. 93 McG.).
57. *Pacciacus*: The form of the name is not certain, but this is likely to be a member of a prominent Spanish family of (?) Paciaeci, including the 'Vibius Paciacus' who sheltered the young Crassus at *Crass.* 4 (Konrad). But, even so, 'Sulla sent out' suggests that, at least in Plutarch's understanding, Sulla dispatched him *from Italy*.
58. *Tingis*: Modern Tangier.
59. *giant Antaeus*: A Libyan giant, said to have been the son of Poseidon and Earth, who forced visitors to wrestle with him and killed them after he had won (Pindar *Isthmian* 4.52–5). He met his match in Heracles. He was said to have been buried in the modern El-Araish, some 75 km south-west of Tingis.
60. *no king ... historical research*: Juba II, king of Mauretania (*Ant.* 87 and n. 383). This item may be drawn from Juba's own work, and if so Plutarch's gloss – 'this story may well have originated from a desire to please King Juba' – is presumably his own acute addition.
61. *invited him to become their leader*: The appeal from Lusitania came in 80 BCE. It is referred to again in ch. 22 (n. 111).
62. *Sertorius ... could resist pleasure and fear alike*: This was not what was said by less generous critics: in his final years 'he spent his time with women, parties and drinking, and these were frequently his undoing', according to App. *Civil Wars* 1.113.
63. *cruel and vindictive treatment of his hostages*: Plutarch anticipates the story of ch. 25. It is rare for him to glance ahead like this except for items that his readers would certainly know (for instance, to Caesar's becoming first man at Rome, *Caes.* 3, or to Antony's fascination with Cleopatra, *Ant.* 10). Here it helps the reader to be alert to any signs of Sertorius's decline and to weigh different ways of explaining them (Intro.).
64. *a virtue ... those who treated him badly*: This is one of Plutarch's most explicit statements on the possibility of character-change: for discussion, see C. Gill, *CQ* 33 (1983), 478–81. Plutarch normally finds no problem in change for the better: that indeed is a primary purpose of education and of his own writing programme (General Intro. II). Change for the worse is more problematic. Here he seems to play with two different views of

Sertorius's apparent decline: that Sertorius's 'natural character' (Greek *phusis*) had never been particularly humane, and that his earlier moderation was adopted as a matter of calculation; or that his 'natural good qualities' (good *phuseis*, the same word again) may have been of the sort that could be shaken by bad fortune so as to change his 'behavioural pattern' (*ēthos*). Neither view goes quite so far as to say that *phusis* itself can change, even if behaviour can. At all events, Eumenes is different (Intro. and *Eum.* 9).

65. *brought ... under their control*: Plutarch's language could mean either the Roman province of Nearer Spain or, the one more closely 'neighbouring' to Africa, Farther Spain. If the first, as Konrad thinks, he is anticipating the successes of ch. 12; but the second makes more sense with the emphasis on the willingness of the Spanish tribes to come over, and in fact southern Spain is the principal theatre of the war. So *PRR*, p. 505.
66. *fawn ... finally he caught it*: The story of the fawn was famous. Gellius 15.22 gives some similar details to Plutarch, and both probably depend on a version in Sallust (Konrad). The fawn, by then a doe, returns at ch. 20. Eumenes too knew how to exploit popular superstition (*Eum.* 13).
67. *His army consisted of ... horsemen*: On these numbers see Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pp. 230, 470: 'whom he called Romans' seems to be more than a matter of distinguishing different fighting groups, and, as Brunt says, may imply that their Roman citizenship was in doubt. It is just possible that Plutarch's Greek means that the '700 Libyans' were to be included as 'commingled among' these Romans, and that is why Plutarch draws attention to the dubious naming: so Konrad.
68. *four Roman generals*: Presumably the ones Plutarch goes on to mention, Cotta, Fufidius, Domitius Calvinus and Thoranius (or Thorius): on these see nn. 70 and 71.
69. *whose combined strength ... slingers*: All these numbers presumably represent a totalling of several estimates for the successive contingents, and in such cases (as at *Caes.* 15) it is easy for some forces to be counted twice, especially when the rhetorical interest is in a high rather than low number. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, p. 471 reasonably suspects exaggeration.
70. *He defeated ... Nearer Spain*: These victories were respectively: 1. in 80 BCE over Aurelius Cotta (*MRR* ii.80, iii.81); 'Mellaria' was on the northern shore of what we call the Straits of Gibraltar. 2. Also in 80 BCE over Fufidius (*MRR* ii.81, iii.92), near the modern Cordoba; casualty figures tend to be exaggerated (Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, pp. 694–7), so the figure of 2,000 killed may be

suspect. 3. Possibly still in 80 BCE, when Sertorius's quaestor or proquaestor L. Hirtuleius defeated and killed the proconsul Lucius (or possibly Marcus) Domitius Calvinus on the Anas river (*MRR* ii.83–4, iii.84). At least the last two encounters, and presumably all three, were described by Sallust (*Hist.* 1 frs. 108, 111 M. = 95, 100 McG. and also 96, 98 McG.).

71. *Thoranius*: The man's name was apparently L. Thorius Balbus (*MRR* ii.84, iii.205; Cicero mentions him as an accomplished voluptuary, *Fin.* 2.63), and it is possible that we should correct the manuscript reading to 'Thorius' here. The battle took place at Consabura on the Anas in 79 BCE.
72. *Metellus*: Q. Metellus Pius, son of the general who played a leading part in the Jugurthine War. He was consul in 80 BCE and was sent to Spain to deal with Sertorius in 79. Plutarch's language here is curiously oblique for so important an appointment, but his readers may already have been familiar with Metellus and his campaign from *Pomp.* 17.
73. *dispatched from Rome with reinforcements*: Lucius Manlius, proconsul of Transalpine Gaul in 78 BCE, advanced into Spain in that year; his defeats there were followed by further setbacks in Gaul (Caes. *BG* 3.20). For Pompey's appointment to the Spanish command in 77 see ch. 18.
74. *well advanced in years*: Rather overstated, here and at *Luc.* 6 and *Pomp.* 8 and 17, doubtless to accentuate the contrast with the young Pompey. To judge from the date of his praetorship (89 or 88), Metellus was probably about fifty, just four years or so older than Sertorius himself. His taste for luxurious living becomes relevant later in the Life (ch. 22 and n. 107).
75. *never indulged in drinking-bouts*: For a different view of Sertorius's alcoholic habits, see Intro.
76. *when he challenged Metellus to single combat*: Such challenges to single combat figured in the tradition of early Roman history and occasionally in late Republican pre-battle propaganda, but by this time they were not taken up. They are discussed by S. P. Oakley in *CQ* 35 (1985), 392–410. Sertorius's challenge is as unrealistic as Antony's at *Ant.* 62 and 75.
77. *a general's death ... common soldier*: This is a theme that interested Plutarch: he discusses it more broadly at *Pelopidas* 2 (cf. *Comparison of Pelopidas and Marcellus* 3), where he argues that the sensible general owes it to his army to avoid risking his life unnecessarily. We do not know from which of Theophrastus's vast production of books (catalogued at Diog. Laert. 5.42–50) this quotation is drawn.
78. *the Langobrigae*: Probably near Oporto in modern northern

Portugal.

79. *Aquinus*: Not otherwise known.
80. *Oscā*: Modern Huesca in Aragon. Alexander the Great had instituted a similar custom by arranging for 30,000 Persian boys to be taught Greek (*Alex.* 47). The sad sequel here, already anticipated in ch. 10 (n. 63), is told in ch. 25.
81. *carried him up to the walls*: Again it seems based on Sallust: in the *mêlée* ‘Sertorius was raised about half-way up the wall on the shoulders of his servants and then hoisted over the wall by the hands of soldiers positioned on the top of the wall’ (tr. McGushin; *Hist.* 1 fr. 126 M. = 112 McG.). Sallust also described the devotion of Spanish tribes to the kings, probably in the same context (1 fr. 125 M.), though McGushin prints it as 2 fr. 70.
82. *Perperna Vento*: Marcus Perperna Veiento, praetor of Sicily under the Marian government according to *PRR*, p. 481. He was proscribed by Sulla, then joined the rebellion of M. Aemilius Lepidus in 78 BCE and fled to Sertorius after its failure (*MRR* iii.155–6). ‘Belonged to the same political faction as Sertorius’ refers to their support for Cinna and Marius, but by now there was little to connect them other than their shared hostility to Sulla. For Perperna’s role in the Life as Sertorius’s foil see Intro.
83. *Perperna ... decided to fight Metellus independently*: See Konrad: the legal standing of both Perperna and Sertorius was questionable, as it depended on the validity of their original appointments before Sulla’s domination; but, for what these were worth, Sertorius as proconsul of a Spanish province (n. 40) should outrank Perperna, who could claim to be no more than *propraetor* of Sicily.
84. *crossing the Pyrenees*: Probably in 77 BCE: see Konrad and *MRR* iii.162–3, and for Pompey’s appointment *Pomp.* 17.
85. *fifty-three cohorts*: This should amount to some 30,000 men, but doubtless the numbers in each cohort had been reduced during and after the fighting of 78 BCE; perhaps 20,000 men, the figure given for the forces under Perperna’s command in 76 (Livy 91 fr. 21 Jal).
86. *two horses ... completely bare*: This visual parable of the two horses became famous: Pliny can refer to it by saying, ‘We remembered that lesson to be learnt from Sertorius, the way he told a very strong and very weak soldier to take the horse’s tail ... you know the rest’, *Ep.* 3.9.11). Other versions (Frontinus, Val. Max.) make the punch-line concern the way to defeat *Roman* forces in particular.
87. *north of the River Tagonius*: Cara(c)ca was probably some 80 km north-east of Toledo; the Tagonius is the modern Tajuña, a

tributary of the Tagus. One of the more trivial, and perhaps coincidental, parallels with the *Eumenes* is that there too we find a dust-raising incident (ch. 16).

88. *Pompey ... reputation was at its height*: For Pompey's spectacular successes under Sulla and his triumph, see *Pomp.* 6–14. He probably arrived in Spain in 77 BCE (n. 84).
89. *Lauro*: The location of this Lauro is disputed (Konrad, favouring Puig de Santa Maria, about 15 km north of Valencia). A few more details of this campaign are given in other accounts: Sertorius set an elaborate ambush (Sall. *Hist.* 2 fr. 29 M. = 28 McG.), which allowed Pompey's foragers to be picked off, and a legion sent to help them to be destroyed (Frontinus *Stratagems* 2.5.31, App. *Civil Wars* 1.109). Frontinus gives Pompey's losses as 10,000 men.
90. *Sulla's pupil*: See n. 97.
91. *let them all go free*: There were varying accounts of the fate of the townspeople. Orosius 5.23.7 says that many died and the survivors were deported to Lusitania, but App. *Civil Wars* 1.109 seems to confirm some leniency, for he has a whole Roman cohort being executed as a punishment after one soldier had raped a native woman.
92. *Pompey's admirers*: This episode is one that a reader would ponder when considering the question of Sertorius's deterioration (ch. 10 with n. 64); Plutarch steers us towards a generous interpretation.
93. *battle ... of Pompey and Metellus*: The Sucro is the Júcar, flowing into the Mediterranean about 20 km south of Valencia: this is the battle that is described in the rest of ch. 19. For Segontia, recounted in ch. 21, see n. 99. These operations took place in 76 BCE (*MRR* iii.163).
94. *prevent Metellus from ... victory*: Such things were not unknown among Roman commanders preoccupied with their own *gloria*, and Plutarch knew it (*Flam.* 7, with Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 219 and 232, n. 82).
95. *Afranius*: Lucius Afranius, the consul of 60 BCE, whose military career often took him to Spain (*MRR* iii.12–13); he was proconsul there in perhaps 71–67, and governed it for Pompey again in 55 and 49. He was defeated by Caesar, again in Spain, at Ilerda in 49 (*Caes.* 36).
96. *only escaped death ... stroke of luck*: More details at *Pomp.* 19.
97. *'If that old woman ... and packed him off to Rome!'*: Or, as Plutarch puts it at *Pomp.* 18, 'I should need only a cane and a whip to deal with this boy if I were not afraid of that old woman', i.e. Metellus. This picks up on the notion of Pompey as 'Sulla's pupil' (ch. 18): this – says Sertorius – is indeed a boy among men.
98. *disappearance of his fawn*: See ch. 11 and n. 66. The story of the

loss and reappearance is also told in Gellius 15.22 and App. *Civil Wars* 1.110: there are some variations, with for instance Gellius having the doe come to Sertorius's bedroom rather than Plutarch's public display of affection, and one or more of these authors may well have coloured the story imaginatively.

99. *Segontia*: It is not certain which of several Segontias this is: Konrad argues for Segontia Lanka, the modern Langa de Duero. This battle turned the tide against Sertorius: it was described by Sallust (*Hist.* 2 fr. 68 M. = 57 McG.; a few further fragments too are probably from this part of the narrative).
100. *Memmius*: Pompey's brother-in-law, mentioned by Cic. *Pro Balbo* 5 as a lieutenant of Metellus and then quaestor of Pompey.
101. *a strong city in the mountains*: Konrad identifies this with Clunia (the name is mentioned by Livy *Perioche* 92), about 18 km south of Segontia Lanka.
102. *Pompey spending the winter among the Vaccaeii*: This was the winter of 76–5 BCE (Konrad and MRR iii.163). The Vaccaeii were a tribe of north-western Spain, inhabiting a region north of the River Douro.
103. *wrote to the senate*: Sallust's version of this letter survives (*Hist.* 2 fr. 98 M. = 82 McG.).
104. *Sertorius ... before Pompey*: Sallust's version of the letter ends, 'Unless you help, my army, and with it the whole Spanish war, will move to Italy. That is not my wish, but it is my warning.' That 'whole Spanish war' similarly implies that Sertorius will come too, 'gross exaggeration' though that was (R. Seager, *Pompey the Great* (2nd edn, 2002), p. 34). The notion that Pompey might be following on Sertorius's heels rather than the other way round is even grosser, though this scare too may have been mongered. The versions in *Pomp.* 20 and *Luc.* 5 are more geared to Roman politics, and do not mention any Italian fear of Sertorius, focusing instead on Lucullus's role in getting the senate to accede to Pompey's demands.
105. *a hundred talents of silver and ... land*: The equivalent of 2.4 million sesterces (a vast sum) and about 12,500 acres or 5,000 hectares. Metellus's proclamation probably dates to the period before Pompey's arrival, and Plutarch has delayed it to here: so Spann, *Quintus Sertorius*, p. 74, followed by Konrad.
106. *had himself proclaimed Imperator*: The traditional way for an army to acclaim its successful general (*Ant.* 28 and 43, with nn. 159 and 231). This was presumably after the battle of Segontia (ch. 21).
107. *wreathes ... banquets*: Plutarch picks up the theme of Metellus's taste for the good life (ch. 13). Sallust gave a vivid account of one

of these lavish banquets (*Hist.* 2 fr. 70 M. = 59 McG.), featuring for instance a contrivance whereby an effigy of Victory lowered a crown on to Metellus's head.

108. *the title of senate*: Perhaps in 76 BCE. Cf. the 'anti-senate' of Sulpicius Rufus in 88 (*Sull.* 8), the 'something like a senate' that gathered around Sulla in the east in 85 (*Sull.* 22), the senate-meetings held by Pompey in Greece (*Pomp.* 64–5) and the counter-senate organized by Antony in 32 (Dio 50.3.2). In each case it reflects a claim still to represent the rightful government of Rome (which is not quite the same as forming a 'government in exile': Konrad has good arguments against that interpretation).
109. *would rather live ... ruler of all the rest of the world*: So unlike Julius Caesar, then, who on passing a miserable Alpine village told his companions that 'I would rather be the first man here than the second in Rome', *Caes.* 11.
110. *his mother ... completely devoted*: See ch. 2 and n. 9.
111. *friends ... take up the command there*: Presumably a reference back to the invitation of late 80 BCE (ch. 10 and n. 61), when Sertorius was in Mauretania.
112. *mild-tempered man ... self-defence*: The interpretation of Sertorius's character given here coheres closely with that given in *Comp. Sert.–Eum.*
113. *Mithridates*: Ruler of the Black Sea Kingdom of Pontus, he invaded Asia in 88 BCE, and the inhabitants, long oppressed by Roman taxation and exploitation (cf. ch. 24), rose and massacred many of the Roman settlers. Sulla defeated Mithridates and made peace with him in 85 BCE: the campaign is described at *Sull.* 11–24. The negotiations with Sertorius (G–C, pp. 248–9) took place in 76 or 75 BCE. For his later history see *Luc.* 8–36 and *Pomp.* 30–42.
114. *comparing ... with Pyrrhus*: This picks up the reflections of ch. 1 (n. 5), which now seem less casual than they may then have appeared: by now Hannibal is relevant not just as a great general but – like Pyrrhus – as an enemy of Rome. But Sertorius's reply confirms his distaste for that role (Intro.).
115. *terms of his treaty with Sulla*: *Sull.* 22, 24.
116. *the whole of Asia ... in full and lawful possession of it*: The province of Asia had been established in 133 when Attalus III left his kingdom to Rome: *Ti. Gracch.* 14 with n. 61.
117. *lost in war to Fimbria*: *Luc.* 3.
118. *could not consent ... Mithridates's hands again*: Contrast App. *Mith.* 68, where Sertorius does consent to the abandonment of Asia to Mithridates. Plutarch is probably right (Konrad).
119. *'This Sertorius ... Palatine Hill?'*: By Plutarch's time the imperial palace was situated on the Palatine (cf. *Galb.* 1). If he is

fabricating or elaborating this response of Mithridates (he may well be), the point is how far short the king falls of understanding Sertorius, for he assumes that his only conceivable object was to become the sort of emperor that the Caesars later became.

120. *forty ships*: It is not certain whether this force ever arrived, but it probably did: the anti-pirate naval operations of M. Antonius in 74 BCE (*Ant.* 1 with n. 2) extended as far as Spain (*MRR* ii.101–2), and may have been directed against this fleet.
121. *Marcus Marius*: Quaestor in 76 (*MRR* ii.93, iii.140). For his command in the East and his death see *Luc.* 8 and 12.
122. *the soldiers billeted there*: Cf. ch. 6 and n. 43.
123. *the senators ... resentful of his authority*: For the different picture painted by Appian see n. 125.
124. *Perperna*: See ch. 15 and n. 82.
125. *always with the excuse ... on Sertorius's orders*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.112 also suggests friction between Sertorius's Roman and Iberian supporters, though he explains it differently: Sertorius had replaced his Roman bodyguard by Spaniards, and the Iberians began to treat the Romans badly rather than (as here) the other way round. That picture would not sit at all comfortably with Plutarch's stress on Sertorius as a loyal Roman at heart (ch. 22, etc.). Diod. 37.22a paints a blacker picture of Sertorius behaving so badly by the end that he alienated everyone, and there are hints of the same portrayal at App. *Civil Wars* 1.113 (Intro.).
126. *educated at Osca*: See ch. 14 and n. 80.
127. *his conspiracy against Sertorius*: App. *Civil Wars* 1.113 gives a different picture, with Sertorius now so suspicious of everyone (cf. n. 125) that Perperna feared for his own safety and launched a pre-emptive strike. Appian says he initially had ten associates, some of whom were exposed before the final banquet: some of them were punished and some escaped.
128. *Manlius*: Nothing more is known of him.
129. *Aufidius*: Nothing more is known of him either, other than his later penurious life (ch. 27).
130. *Gracinus*: Octavius Graecinus, who had commanded twenty Iberian cohorts at Lauro (ch. 18).
131. *entertainments ... orderly fashion*: See ch. 13 and n. 75. App. *Civil Wars* 1.113 again paints a different picture of the final years: by now 'Sertorius spent most of his time in luxurious living, spending his time with wine and women and parties'. Sallust clearly gave an account of this final banquet (*Hist.* 3 fr. 83 M. = 79 McG.), including some of the same names as Plutarch gives here.
132. *Antonius*: This man's relationship, if any, to the various senatorial Antonii known from the period is uncertain.

133. *died beneath a hail of blows*: Probably in the second half of 73 BCE (MRR iii.164–5, following Konrad), in Osca.
134. *no better at giving orders ... obeying them*: Despite the negative portrayal of Perperna, Plutarch omits other items here (if he knew them) that told to his further discredit: Sertorius had made him his heir, Perperna had to quell disquiet with bribes and threats and a few murders, and he freed prisoners from the gaols (App. *Civil Wars* 1.114).
135. *Perpenna ... defeated and taken prisoner*: More details at *Pomp.* 20.
136. *change the constitution*: Plutarch often speaks in such language of the aims of radical Roman politicians (General Intro. IV; Pelling, *P&H*, p. 218), but real-life political exchanges often tried to smear opponents with a charge of seeking ‘revolution’, for instance in the Catilinarian affair twenty years later. Whether these letters were genuine or fabricated – and whether or not, if genuine, Perperna was describing their content accurately – talk of aspirations of regime-change may well go back to the events themselves.
137. *secret correspondence ... burned*: This became a favourite way for victorious generals to radiate a promise of moderation: Caesar, Octavian and Caligula all did it. Cf. also Eumenes’ destruction of his own correspondence (*Eum.* 16).
138. *some were captured ... on Pompey’s orders*: In *Pomp.* 20 most of the Sertorian leaders are killed in the final battle; here Plutarch prefers to develop the perspective (one he favours also in other Lives, esp. *Caesar* (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 365, 378–9) that Sertorius’s killers eventually paid for it, either through their own deaths or at least, in Aufidius’s case, with terminal misery.
139. *he lived on ... detested by all*: The end of the *Eumenes* is similar.

Notes to the Comparison of Sertorius and Eumenes

1. *all the allies ... respect for his reputation*: *Sert.* 10.
2. *for the one man ... success*: This antithesis is slick but matches the narrative so poorly that it is hard to say which man is which. The train of thought suggests that the first is Eumenes, the second Sertorius, for the previous sentence has stressed the ‘later’ plotting against Sertorius, but in fact both Lives have developed the notion of success generating jealousy and consequent plotting (*Sert.* 15 and esp. 25 (Perperna), and *Eum.* 16).
3. *Eumenes ... Antigonus ... on his side*: Especially clear in the approach of Antigonus at *Eum.* 12.
4. *Pompey ... live in retirement*: *Sert.* 22, where it is both Metellus and Pompey who refuse such a request. (The Greek here could equally

mean 'Pompey and his associates', though that would be a strange way of including Metellus.)

5. *The one man's death ... it was coming: Sert. 26, Eum. 16–17.*
6. *Eumenes made him master of his spirit too: A rather harsher verdict than the narrative of Eum. 17–19 had suggested (Intro.).*
Plutarch's terminal judgement on Demetrius is similar (*Comp. Demetr.–Ant. 6*).

LUCULLUS

Further Reading

This Life has until recently attracted little interest, but there is an excellent Italian commentary by Barbara Scardigli (1989). She gives a very full bibliography, but the most detailed treatment is now M. Tröster's *Themes, Character, and Politics in Plutarch's Life of Lucullus: the Construction of a Roman Aristocrat* (*Historia Einzelschrift* 201 (2008)), using the Life to build a picture of Lucullus who fits more closely than earlier scholars had thought into a particular pattern of cultivated aristocratic behaviour. There are also useful biographies by J. van Ooteghem, *Lucius Licinius Lucullus* (1959), and A. Keaveney, *Lucullus* (1992). There is much of value on the Mithridatic Wars in A. N. Sherwin-White's *Roman Foreign Policy in the East* (1984), B. C. McGing's *The Foreign Policy of Mithridates VI Eupator King of Pontus* (1986) and more briefly in ch. 8a (by A. N. Sherwin-White) in *CAH* ix₂ (1994). P. McGushin's Clarendon Ancient History editions of Sallust's *Histories* (Books 1–2, 1992; Books 3–4, 1994) are very helpful.

Notes to the Introduction to Lucullus

1. The first was *Epaminondas and Scipio* (cf. General Intro. I). For the relative chronology, C. P. Jones, *JRS* 56 (1966), 67–8 = B. Scardigli (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (1995), pp. 109–11. The early position is not absolutely certain, but likely enough.
2. Various interesting insights on the story are given by J. Ma, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994), 49–80.
3. Jones, op. cit.
4. In *Philosophia Togata* (ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (1989)), pp. 199–208, I discuss more fully the way Plutarch treats the Greek culture of his Roman subjects.
5. The picture may be overstated: aristocratic torpor lent itself to exaggeration. Cf. E. S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (1974), p. 499; M. Tröster, *Themes, Character, and Politics*, ch. 3. But in Lucullus's case it is hard to think it is without foundation, though it is true that, as Tröster observes, the same anecdotes of his luxurious excesses keep cropping up in other sources as well as Plutarch. We do hear of his political interventions in his last few years, but they are sparser than we might expect of a man of such prestige.
6. Cf. *Luc.* 38 with n. 218, 43 and n. 245.
7. He says so more clearly in *Comp. Cim.–Luc.* 1, where Cimon

emerges as the less culpable of the two. But even there Plutarch notes that it all might have seemed different if Lucullus had died earlier, or Cimon had lived on into retirement.

8. Generosity to Greeks: chs. 18, 22, 29, 33. Murena (Plutarch emphasizes) was hamfisted in comparison, ch. 19. General justice: chs. 4, 7, 20, 23, 24; contrast Tigranes, ch. 21. (Tigranes' antihellenism is stressed only here, not for instance in *Pompey*: that is not a coincidence.) Here again Lucullus compares closely with Cimon (*Cim.* 6, 11). More on Lucullus's Hellenism in Tröster, *Themes, Character, and Politics*, ch. 2.
9. Cf. ch. 42 with n. 231.
10. See especially Jones, op. cit. It was probably written close to the year 100 CE.
11. Cf. chs. 8–9 with n. 54 (grandiloquence), 13 (self-regarding pride and bluster), 24 (over-confidence), 30 and n. 158 (blustery competitiveness), 32 (confidence), 35 and n. 189 (boastfulness to the senate). Cf. Mithridates in chs. 7, 11 with n. 57, Tigranes in ch. 26 with n. 133; and Lucullus's own subordinate Triarius is similarly overconfident in ch. 35. Such qualities are infectious.
12. Chs. 7, 14; 17 (soldiers' greed prevents capture of Mithridates) and 19 (then it hinders the saving of Amisus); then 24, 30, 32–5.
13. Plutarch's presentation of Lucullus's military leadership is discussed by Tröster, *Themes, Character, and Politics*, ch. 5.
14. Chs. 5, 20 and 24; we shall hear more later in 33 and in 35 (cf. General Intro. IV). The analysis is not a profound one.
15. See Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 2–7.
16. Cf. chs. 5–6 on Praecia and Cethegus; those crude references to the 'demagogues' (n. 14); and the unexplained references to 'the followers of Pompey and Crassus' in ch. 38 or the shared leadership of 'Cato and Crassus' in ch. 42 (nn. 218, 238).
17. It was translated around this time by one Zenobius (*Suda* Z 73 Adler): Jones, *P&R*, p. 86.
18. Cf. for instance chs. 9 and nn. 52, 56, 11 and n. 58, 13 and n. 73, 19 and n. 97, 21 and n. 111, 28 and n. 141, 30 and nn. 157, 167, 33 and nn. 172, 173.
19. Assuming that his work extended so far. That is quite likely (R. Syme, *Sallust* (1964), pp. 190–92).
20. Sall. *Hist.* 5.12 M. = 10 McG., 'arrogantly avid for evil', may well refer to Clodius at the time of the mutiny (chs. 33–5); 3.17 M. = 8 McG., 'already badly accustomed to every violent wrangle', seems to refer to another of that ilk (in his 1893 edn Maurenbrecher suggested possibly Quinctius, cf. chs. 5 and 33). For 'the demagogues' in Plutarch see n. 14.
21. Cic., *Arch.* 21. So, recently, T. W. Hillard, *Antichthon* 21 (1987),

37–47. Cf. ch. 12 and n. 64.

22. Such use of a poetic narrative source is hard to parallel, and it is also difficult to believe that Plutarch would have known of Archias's poem without also knowing something of him as a person. If Plutarch had known of Lucullus's role in securing him the citizenship (highlighted in Cicero's speech in Archias's defence), he would surely have mentioned it. It suited the stress on Lucullus's generosity to Greeks.
23. Ch. 42 with n. 236.
24. But the parallel story at ch. 10 seems to come from a written source (cf. App. *Mith.* 75).

Notes to Lucullus

1. *Lucullus's grandfather*: L. Licinius Lucullus, consul of 151 BCE and inglorious commander in the Spanish Wars.
2. *Metellus ... Numidicus*: Q. Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, famous for his clashes with Marius. He was consul of 109 BCE and general in the Jugurthan War; his exploits there won him his cognomen. In 100 he went into exile after refusing to swear to observe Saturninus's agrarian law, but returned in 99–8. Plutarch planned to write his biography (*Mar.* 29), but there is no sign that he lived to do so.
3. *father ... embezzlement*: L. Licinius Lucullus, praetor in 104 BCE. In the following year he held a command in the Sicilian slave war; his trial (probably 101) centred on his misconduct there as well as embezzlement.
4. *his mother Caecilia*: Caecilia Metella, sister of Numidicus. Her taste for excess, like her husband's for wealth, are inherited by Lucullus (Intro.).
5. *the augur Servilius*: Apparently C. Servilius, who in 102 BCE succeeded Lucullus *père* in Sicily. His own command was just as inglorious. His own trial, in 100 or soon afterwards, was remembered for the filial piety of the Luculli brothers (Cic. *Luc.* 1, *Off.* 2.50, *De Provinciis Consularibus* 22); Plutarch here leaves Marcus till the end of the chapter. The charge is unclear, but it presumably related to the Sicilian command.
6. *Sulla was writing ... achievements*: The dictator's Memoirs covered most of his life: according to *Sull.* 37.1, Book 22 ended with events two days before his death. This passage suggests that this 'dedication' presented the material as if it was only a draft of raw material for others to work up. Caesar's Commentaries apparently made the same pretence.
7. *like frenzied tunny, threshing the deep*: From an unknown tragedy.

Plutarch quotes the line again at *God's Slowness to Punish* 554f. 'Stale, uncultured and struck dumb' presumably comes from the same place.

8. *Hortensius the forensic orator*: Q. Hortensius Hortalus, consul in 69 BCE and Cicero's predecessor as Rome's most renowned orator. Born in 114, he was a close contemporary of Lucullus (born c. 117): so his fame as a 'forensic orator', like Sisenna's as a historian, postdates this story, and the epithets simply serve here as convenient identifying labels. Cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 9 with n. 41.
9. *Sisenna the historian*: L. Cornelius Sisenna, again about the same age as Lucullus. His History (now lost) was regarded by Cicero as the most impressive before his own day.
10. *the Marsic War*: I.e. the Social War of 91–87 (*Sert.* 4 and n. 21).
11. *brother Marcus*: M. Terentius Varro Lucullus, adopted by the antiquary Varro. The narrative returns to him at the end of the Life (ch. 43). Plutarch was most struck by the brothers' closeness, and takes this aedileship case as an example at *On Brotherly Love* 484d–e.
12. *elected aedile ... along with Marcus*: In 79 BCE. Plutarch has here omitted Lucullus's quaestorship (87). The campaigns of chs. 2–4 date to 87–80, conducted by Lucullus as quaestor, then as proquaestor; they therefore precede this aedileship. Plutarch overrides chronology in order to collect the family information and emphasize the fraternal love as early as possible.
13. *the Mithridatic War*: The First Mithridatic War of 88–85, described at *Sull.* 11–24.
14. *Luculleans*: The term was extended to several groups of coins minted by others, 'doubtless because L. Lucullus was the officer chiefly identified in Greek eyes with exactions of money to finance Sullan activities' (Crawford, *RRC* i.80, n. 1).
15. *Sulla was based in Athens*: See *Sull.* 12–14, 26.
16. *Crete ... brought the island over*: In 87–6 BCE. Crete had been a hotbed of piracy for years, and the pirates gave intermittent support to Mithridates.
17. *Cyrene ... tyrannies and warfare*: Cyrene's last ruler, Ptolemy Apion, left his kingdom to Rome on his death in 96 BCE; administration was at first left in the hands of the Greek cities, until in 74 it became a Roman province.
18. *whose wings Fortune has clipped*: A remark with wider implications for the Life: there will be other occasions when Lucullus finds men made improvident by their apparent prosperity, esp. Tigranes at ch. 26; and Lucullus will come close to fitting the pattern himself (Intro.). Plutarch uses this quotation again to introduce his essay *To an Untaught Prince* (779d).

19. *the young King Ptolemy*: Ptolemy X (IX) Soter was at present fifty-six years old; Plutarch has perhaps confused him with the young Ptolemy XI, exiled to Cos in 103 BCE. But the text may well be corrupt here.
20. *not visit any of the ... marvels of Egypt*: Cicero evidently thought Lucullus had more time to spare; he makes him refer to the philosophical disquisitions he had attended (*Luc.* 11, 61). Plutarch stresses the theme, as he has just stressed Lucullus's frugal restraint, to contrast with the later luxury and excesses.
21. *Fimbria*: C. Flavius Fimbria, a prominent supporter of Marius; in 86 he had been sent to the East under the command of the consul Valerius Flaccus, but had killed him in a mutiny (cf. chs. 7 and 33) and taken over his command: G–C, pp. 185.
22. *Orchomenus and Chaeronea*: The two victories over Mithridates in 86 BCE (cf. *Sull.* 16–21).
23. *Neoptolemus*: The general and admiral of Mithridates. This battle of Tenedos was the last exchange of the First Mithridatic War (summer 85 BCE).
24. *pentekonter*: A fifty-oared ship.
25. *Terms were soon agreed*: In August 85 (*Sull.* 22–4; G–C, pp. 187–8).
26. *Manius*: M'. Aquillius, the consul of 101 BCE, who was defeated by Mithridates in Bithynia in 88, then handed over with others by Mytilene and killed. Aquillius and his followers were supporters of Marius: this may explain Lucullus's intended leniency, if it is to be believed. Lucullus's punishment of the city fell in 80, and Plutarch has here passed over a lengthy and uneventful period of his proquaestorship. Cic. *Luc.* 2 comments on its peacefulness.
27. *Elaea*: On the mainland coast, some 50 km sailing from Mytilene.
28. *ills ... for their fellow-men*: These 'ills' are recounted more fully at *Sull.* 30–34 and *Mar.* 43–5. Cf. *Sert.* 5 with nn. 32–4 for Plutarch's concern to whisk a sympathetic character away from blame.
29. *as I have said*: Ch. 1.
30. *on his death*: In 78 BCE: G–C, pp. 231–2.
31. *176th Olympiad*: Lucullus was consul with M. Aurelius Cotta in 74 BCE. It was no easy matter to give helpful dates in Roman history: Romans tended to date only by the names of the consuls. Elsewhere Plutarch sometimes fixes an early epoch by Olympiads (*Rom.* 12, *Lycurgus* 1, *Numa* 1), but this is the only occasion when he adopts the method for more mainstream history.
32. *Pompey ... in Spain*: For Pompey's Spanish campaigns against Sertorius and then Perperna see *Sert.* 15–27. But the picture, here and in ch. 4, of Lucullus's early rift with Pompey may well be a retrojection of the later bad feeling between the two, as T. P. Hillman argues, *Classical Philology* 86 (1991), 315–18.

33. *Pompey wrote ... back to Italy*: At the beginning of 74 BCE (*Sert.* 21 and n. 104 there).
34. *Cethegus*: P. Cornelius Cethegus, whose Marian past did not exclude him from Sulla's favour. He was active in the proscriptions, and his power behind the scenes became notorious in the seventies BCE.
35. *Lucius Quinctius*: Tribune in 74 BCE. His principal concern was to secure the restoration of the full powers of the tribunate (*MRR* ii.103, G–C, p. 250); that was eventually carried by Pompey in 70. Cf. ch. 33, where Quinctius is again active against Lucullus.
36. *great malady*: One of several occasions where Plutarch shows some sympathy for the Sullan constitution (cf. *Cic.* 3, 10, *Pomp.* 5, *Comp. Ages.–Pomp.* 1), though in the *Sulla* itself he is more reserved.
37. *Octavius, the governor of Cilicia*: L. Octavius, the consul of 75; he died early in 74 BCE (*MRR* ii.104).
38. *act out of character*: One of several passages in the Lives where Plutarch makes people act out of character (*Aem.* 30, *Pericles* 7, *Comp. Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.* 5). Here he could have made it a symptom of Lucullus's taste for dissipation, but he prefers to make the younger Lucullus more naturally restrained, just as he had in ch. 2.
39. *Metellus*: Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius, the consul of 80 BCE, an effective general for Sulla in the Civil War, then less successful against Sertorius in Spain until (to his annoyance) he was joined by Pompey (*Sert.* 12–22).
40. *sapped by age*: Overstated: see n. 74 to *Sert.* 13.
41. *Lucullus now crossed to Asia*: In 74 BCE; Asia was probably included in his province.
42. *killing the consul and general Flaccus*: In 86 BCE; cf. n. 21.
43. *betrayed Fimbria himself to Sulla*: In 85 BCE, just after the conclusion of peace with Mithridates (*Sull.* 25, G–C, pp. 188–9). Fimbria killed himself.
44. *120,000 infantry*: 140,000 according to App. *Mith.* 69.294, 150,000 according to Strabo 12.575; Memnon, *FGrH* 434.27.3, gives 150,000 together with 12,000 cavalry and 120 scythed chariots. On these figures cf. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, p. 168.
45. *his ships*: They numbered four hundred (Memnon, *FGrH* 434.27.2, Strabo 12.576).
46. *invaded Bithynia*: In early 73 BCE (Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, pp. 164–5; B. C. McGing, *Phoenix* 38 (1984), 12–18), thus precipitating the Third Mithridatic War. Bithynia's king Nicomedes had recently died, leaving the kingdom to Rome.

47. *suffering intolerably ... tax-gatherers*: Memnon, *FGrH* 434.27.6, tells of a particular incident at Heracleia, where demanding tax-gatherers were murdered.
48. *Later Lucullus was to drive them out*: See ch. 20 and n. 105.
49. *severe defeat ... 4,000 infantry*: 8,000 men killed and 9,800 captured according to Memnon, *FGrH* 434.27.7; sixty ships captured and four destroyed (Cotta's entire fleet), and 3,000 men killed according to the fuller account of App. *Mith.* 71, who describes how Cotta first gathered his forces at Chalcedon, then there was a fierce battle around the walls, and finally Mithridates pressed on to attack the undefended fleet.
50. *Archelaus*: Brother of Neoptolemus (n. 23) and effective general of Mithridates in the First Mithridatic War. After fighting in Boeotia at Chaeronea and Orchomenus, he had been active in the peace negotiations in 85, and Mithridates suspected him of complicity with Sulla; when the Second War broke out in 83 BCE he deserted to the Romans.
51. *Marius ... Mithridates*: Mithridates' agreement with Sertorius was reached in 76 or 75 BCE: more details at *Sert.* 23–4 (and see nn. there). The general was M. Marius (*Sert.* 24 with n. 121).
52. *with a dark wet night to help him*: Perhaps based on Sallust, who wrote of 'high clouds covering the skies' (*Hist.* 3.27 M. = 94 McG.).
53. *so-called 'Thracian Village' ... drawn*: It is hard to understand how Mithridates should have allowed Lucullus to occupy so strong a position so easily. In his more detailed account, App. *Mith.* 72 explains (not very plausibly) that the king was expecting desertions.
54. *grandly assured them ... within a few days*: Blustering promises are one of Lucullus's hallmarks, but here and at ch. 8 ('better to save a single Roman from the enemy than capture everything the enemy possessed') the grandiloquence works effectively, largely because it is combined with an unshowy caution in practice.
55. *Tigranes*: Cf. n. 78.
56. *Demonax*: Sall. *Hist.* 3.37 M. = 23 McG. apparently told of Demonax floating in secretly by night, clinging to an improvised life-raft.
57. *taste for glory and confrontation*: Characteristics which Mithridates shares with Lucullus; but Lucullus keeps them under control, for the moment.
58. *the historian Sallust*: *Hist.* 3.42 M. = 29 McG. Sallust's account is probably Plutarch's main source for these events (Intro.); he too clearly made much of the famine, for instance, and the hardships of Lucullus's pursuit (3.38–40 M. = 24–5, 28 McG.; probably also

27 McG.).

59. *Scipio*: Probably L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, sent out as nominal commander against Antiochus in 190 BCE. It might be his more illustrious brother Scipio Africanus, who was intended to have effective command in that war; but Africanus was too ill to have an active part in the victory at Magnesia in 189.
60. *Orchomenus and Chaeronea*: In 86 BCE: nn. 22, 50.
61. *by now*: Autumn 73 BCE: G–C, pp. 257–9.
62. *to bribe some of the Roman troops*: The Fimbriani: ch. 7, and nn. 21, 42.
63. *River Granicus*: In Mysia; the scene of Alexander's famous victory of 334 BCE. There seems to have been a battle at the River Aesepus too (Florus 3.5.17), and that is the one emphasized by Memnon, *FGrH* 434.28.4 and App. *Mith.* 76. Plutarch prefers to stress the Granicus, probably because of the Alexander connection: the following trip to the Troad also has an Alexander flavour (cf. *Alex.* 15). Lucullus is heroic indeed.
64. *'Why slumber ... nigh?'*: The line is of unknown provenance; just possibly the poet Archias (Intro.).
65. *pentekonters*: See n. 24.
66. *He put out to sea ... and captured these*: In spring 72 BCE. Thirteen ships were captured (App. *Mith.* 77).
67. *Isidorus*: A notorious pirate commander, and an important figure in the recent tightening of the Cilician pirates' organization. A few years earlier he had dominated the Western Mediterranean (Florus 1.41.3); in 78 BCE he had been bloodily defeated by P. Servilius Isauricus.
68. *the island*: The small island of Chryse, famous in legend as the place where Philoctetes was abandoned during the Trojan War. App. *Mith.* 77 gives a fuller account of the fighting.
69. *open to attack from Lucullus's fleet*: Thirty-two men-of-war and some transports were sunk or captured (Orosius 6.2.21).
70. *Sertorius's general Marius*: See ch. 8 and n. 51.
71. *humiliation and outrage*: He was soon executed, no doubt nastily (App. *Mith.* 77, Orosius 6.2.22).
72. *Voconius*: An obscure person, just possibly identical with the Barba mentioned by App. *Mith.* 77 and Memnon, *FGrH* 434.28.
73. *for days afterwards ... rough waters*: According to App. *Mith.* 78 about 10,000 men and sixty ships were lost. Both authors may well derive from Sallust, who made something of this storm (*Hist.* 3.54, 56 M. = 37–8 McG.).
74. *Priapus*: A town on the Propontis, between Parion and Cyzicus.
75. *invasion ... Bithynia and Galatia*: In 72 BCE.
76. *Themiscyra*: App. *Mith.* 78, apparently from the same source as

Plutarch (perhaps Sallust), gives fuller details of the sieges of Themiscyra and Amisus. Themiscyra in particular gave rise to good stories of the townsmen digging down to intercept the besiegers' tunnels, and letting wild beasts loose upon them.

77. *they went on*: Extended direct speech is rare in Plutarch, and always concerns vital themes (*Ti. Gracch.* 9 and n. 44). Here it reflects the importance Plutarch attaches to Lucullus's strategy: it shows more military than human insight, for he fails to read his men aright, and their distemper will later be crucial. For a similar case of military discontent, but one that shows a general at his best, cf. *Caes.* 37.
78. *Tigranes, King of Kings*: Tigranes I ('the Great'), who had ruled Armenia since shortly after 100 BCE. By now he had driven the Parthians out of northern Mesopotamia and Atropatene, conquered Syria, Cilicia and Phoenicia, and transported the inhabitants of twelve Greek cities of Asia Minor to the new city of Tigranocerta (cf. chs. 21, 26 and 29). He was married to Mithridates' daughter Cleopatra (ch. 22), though at present (to judge from Memnon, *FGrH* 434.29.6, 31) he was reluctant to support Mithridates too strongly. 'King of Kings' was a relatively common Oriental title (cf. *Ant.* 54); Tigranes deserved it more than most.
79. *winter*: The winter of 72–71 BCE.
80. *Murena*: L. Licinius Murena, Lucullus's legate. Later he was praetor in 65 BCE, then elected consul for 62 and successfully defended by Cicero when prosecuted for electoral bribery. Cicero's speech is extant, but there is no sign that Plutarch knew it (Intro.).
81. *Pomponius*: Lucullus's cavalry commander (App. *Mith.* 79). He may be the same as the 'M. Pompeius' entrusted with the pursuit of the king according to Memnon, *FGrH* 434.30.2
82. *lit fires*: To deceive the enemy into believing he was still at his daytime camp.
83. *Olthacus*: App. *Mith.* 79 calls him Olcabas, Front. *Strat.* 2.5.30 Adathas. He may be the same as the 'Olthaces' mentioned by App. *Mith.* 117 as a Colchian prince captured by Pompey and displayed in his triumph in 61 BCE.
84. *certain marks of dishonour ... Olthacus's pretended resentment*: The ploy (or the story) owes something to the tale of Zopyrus at Herodotus 3.153–60. According to App. *Mith.* 79 this desertion was a little earlier, and Olthacus was able to convince Lucullus of his loyalty by his service in the cavalry battle of ch. 15. Plutarch appears to derive from the same source, but delays the desertion to keep the story of Olthacus in one piece.

85. *Sornatius*: One of Lucullus's legates (cf. chs. 24, 30, 35). We are now in spring 70 BCE.
86. *Menander*: Mentioned in several operations as the king's cavalry commander; he was finally captured and paraded in Pompey's triumph in 61 BCE.
87. *Adrianus*: Mentioned only here and in the brief parallel account of Phlegon of Tralles, *FGrH* 257.12.
88. *Menemachus and Myron*: Memnon, *FGrH* 434.29, gives their names as Diophantus and Taxilles. They had 2,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry.
89. *Dorylaus ... for the sake of that very cloak*: A mistake: Dorylaus (who had commanded at Chaeronea, *Sull.* 20) survived. He was killed a few years later when trying to bring the kingdom over to the Roman side (Strabo 12.3.33).
90. *Hermaeus*: This may be the same as the infantry commander Hermaeus mentioned by Memnon, *FGrH* 434.28.3.
91. *Mithridates ... mingled with all the rest*: According to App. *Mith.* 81 Mithridates at least tried to restrain his troops, and Plutarch may here have simplified to sharpen the contrast with the strong lead given by Lucullus at the end of ch. 15: it illuminates the difference between the two armies as much as that between the commanders.
92. *let Mithridates escape*: He made his way to Armenia.
93. *Monime*: According to App. *Mith.* 21 Mithridates saw Monime among the captives at Stratonicea in Caria in 88 BCE, and was smitten. Pompey later discovered their love-letters (*Pomp.* 37).
94. *diadem*: The fabric headband that symbolized royalty (*Ti. Gracch.* 14 and n. 64).
95. *Appius*: Appius Claudius Pulcher, later consul in 54 BCE, now legate to Lucullus.
96. *Callimachus ... though he later paid for it*: Mentioned only by Plutarch; his fate is told in ch. 32.
97. *it was they who destroyed most of the houses*: Sallust made something of this (*Hist.* 4.15 M. = 48 McG.).
98. *he had wanted to save Athens, and managed to do it*: In 86 BCE. Sulla had indeed been relatively humane, but there was still considerable destruction and bloodshed (*Sull.* 13–14).
99. *Mummius*: L. Mummius Achaicus, the destroyer of Carthage in 146 BCE.
100. *founded when she was at the peak of her power and controlled the sea*: Misleading: Plutarch is perhaps thinking of the Athenian expedition to the Pontus around 435 BCE (*Pericles* 20). It was probably then that Amisus received colonists from Athens and was renamed Piraeus (Theopompus, *FGrH* 115.389). But the city

itself was a much older foundation, from Phocaea or Miletus.

101. *Aristion*: Unpleasant tyrant of Athens from 88 until its capture in 86 BCE. Plutarch had no time for him (*Sull.* 13).
102. *Tyrannion the scholar*: He had edited the texts of Aristotle and Theophrastus which Sulla had brought from Athens to Rome (*Sull.* 26). He settled in Rome in the sixties BCE, and was celebrated and respected as a scholar; he taught in Cicero's house and helped him with his library.
103. *Murena*: L. Licinius Murena: n. 80. The bitterness of Plutarch's criticism here is striking, and surely unfair: Murena presumably intended a generous gesture, even if his style was hamfisted. The hostility may be inherited from Plutarch's source, which must at least (one presumes) have included Lucullus's criticism. But Plutarch himself is tender on the subject of literary men and their fate (cf. ch. 22 and e.g. *Ant.* 80), and the strong stress is likely to be his own: it suits the emphasis on Lucullus's more stylish Hellenism (Intro.).
104. *devastated ... moneylenders*: As Plutarch has already noted in ch. 7.
105. *he imposed ... all the principal*: For these measures, and similar ones elsewhere, cf. P. A. Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic* (1988), p. 175 and n. 106.
106. *the 20,000 talents that Sulla had fined Asia*: In 85 BCE (cf. ch. 4).
107. *bribing some of the demagogues*: As in chs. 5–6 and 24, the view of Roman politics suggested here is rather crude (Intro.).
108. *acclaim from the peoples who had benefited*: Thus honorific inscriptions have been found from Delos, Synnada, Thyateira, Ephesus, Andros, Claros, Hypata and (probably) Chios, and at least three – Sinope, Amastris and Abonuteichus – adopted new Lucullan eras for their yearly calendars.
109. *Appius Claudius ... Lucullus's brother-in-law*: Ch. 19. Lucullus had married Claudius's sister Clodia around 75; for their divorce, ch. 38.
110. *he had filled Mesopotamia with Greeks ... settling them there*: Cf. n. 78.
111. *the first person ... heard speak freely*. Probably from Sallust, who apparently described Tigranes as 'unused to hearing the truth', *Hist.* 4.57 M. = 58 McG.
112. *King of Kings*: See n. 78.
113. *Appius ... took a single bowl and sent the rest back*: The story recalls that of ch. 3: Oriental diplomacy was delicate, but (Plutarch suggests) Lucullus had picked an envoy as astute as himself.
114. *Metrodorus of Scepsis*: A famed enemy of Rome and a literary man (*FGrH* 184), whose books included a work on Tigranes, a discussion of gymnastics and perhaps a *History* (or a discussion of

history) and some sort of geography or travel work. Cicero mentions him several times

115. *Amphicrates the orator*: Only *On Famous Men* is known of his works. His style was turgid ([Longinus] *On the Sublime* 3.2).
116. *Cleopatra ... Tigranes' wife*: See n. 78.
117. *Now Appius arrived*: Apparently in 69 BCE, but there is some chronological confusion here: Sinope seems to have fallen in summer 70. Cf. Keaveney, *Lucullus*, pp. 94–5, and Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, p. 173, n. 50.
118. *Autolycus*: Lucullus would naturally have taken this as the Autolycus who was Odysseus's grandfather, famed for thievery and deceit (*Odyssey* 19.395–6), and the dream would seem disconcerting.
119. *Sthenis*: Renowned Olynthian sculptor of the late fourth century BCE. Strabo 12.3.11 says that Lucullus removed the statue, so this story looks like a justification for some routine Roman plundering.
120. *Autolycus ... Amazons*: This Autolycus was less well known (hence the length of Plutarch's explanation): he was most familiar as one of the Argonauts (Apollonius Rhodius *Argonautica* 2.957). Demoleon and Phlogius were his brothers. His exploit against the Syrians could be seen as vaguely mirroring Lucullus's current success.
121. *Sulla ... Memoirs*: See n. 6. This strange piece of advice seems to have figured in the introductory dedication to Lucullus (*Sull.* 6).
122. *Machares*: King of the Bosphorus regions since they were conquered by Mithridates around 80 BCE. He and his father were on uneasy terms; he had failed to respond to Mithridates' plea for assistance after the defeat at Cyzicus in 73.
123. *Sornatius*: See n. 85.
124. *this second war*: I.e. that with Tigranes, while the 'earlier war' is that with Mithridates. By now we are in summer 69 BCE. The numbers given here are hard to reconcile exactly with those in ch. 27, which suggest a rather larger force, but reinforcements may have come up by then.
125. *these people ... achieve what they wanted*: As in ch. 20, these vaguely described 'demagogues' are hard to identify, but the suspense is quite effective, with the heavy pointer to the forces which will ultimately remove Lucullus from his command.
126. *Little islands ... almost unprecedented*: Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.18 mentions one precedent: the same thing had happened to Cyrus in 401 BCE, and had been taken as similarly auspicious.
127. *offering herself ... for sacrifice*: Just as before at Cyzicus (ch. 10), one of several links between the two campaigns (cf. ch. 27 and n.

- 136). Such stories of animals presenting themselves for sacrifice, sometimes travelling considerable distances to do so, are discussed by F. Naiden, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 127 (2007), 65.
128. *an ordinary mentality ... amid great success*: As in ch. 2 (n. 18), the moralizing generalization has a wider relevance; Lucullus himself will come close to being carried away by his own run of success (cf. ch. 26 and n. 133, then ch. 30).
129. *he was immediately sent ... infantry*: App. *Mith.* 84 briefly mentions the campaign, giving Mithrobarzanes an even smaller force (2,000 cavalry alone). Mithrobarzanes is otherwise unknown.
130. *his legate Sextilius*: Little is known of him beyond his role as legate in this campaign. He is probably the same man as ‘Secilius’, Lucullus’s ambassador to the Parthian king in 68 BCE (Dio 36.3; cf. ch. 30).
131. *Tigranes had destroyed their lands*: Cf. chs. 14 (n. 78) and 21.
132. *Taxiles*: An experienced man: he had held a command at the battle of Chaeronea (*Sull.* 15, 19) and had also fought in the campaign of 71 BCE.
133. *how much better ... at once!*: Braggadocio; but Lucullus is shortly to appear as rather similar himself (ch. 30). Cf. nn. 18, 128, 158.
134. *cataphracts*: Specially heavily armed cavalry, encased in enveloping protective armour.
135. *20,000 archers ... numbered 150,000*: These figures are not too different from those given by App. *Mith.* 85 (250,000 infantry and 50,000 cavalry; App. may well be rounding). They are probably too large. Memnon, *FGrH* 434.57.4, gives a total of 80,000 men, Phlegon, *FGrH* 57.12.10, 40,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry.
136. *mass of barbarians ... Armenians*: The scene recalls the siege of Cyzicus at ch. 9, but here the tables are turned, or so at first it seems. Cf. ch. 24 and n. 127.
137. *no more than 10,000 legionaries ... slingers and archers*. Cf. ch. 24 and n. 124.
138. *“invincible Roman legions”*: Tigranes is referring to Taxiles’s warning about Roman invincibility in ch. 26.
139. *‘black days’ ... battle against the Cimbri*: The Roman defeat at Arausio in 105 BCE. Q. Servilius Caepio, the consul of 106, was blamed for it because of his failure to co-operate with his successor Cn. Mallius Maximus. Plutarch discusses such ‘black days’ (*dies nefasti*), on which it was inauspicious to conduct public affairs, at *Roman Questions* 269e–270d and *Camillus* 19.
140. *October 6th*: Of 69 BCE.
141. *he led the attack on the cataphracts*: App. *Mith.* 85, whose account is otherwise fairly similar, makes Lucullus drive the baggage-train rather than the cataphracts into the ranks of infantry. Plutarch’s

version is the likelier, and the misunderstanding may be Appian's own. Sallust too, probably Plutarch's and perhaps Appian's source, made something of the cataphracts (*Hist.* 4.64, 66 M. = McG.).

142. *his son*: Also named Tigranes. He later deserted his father, taking refuge with the Parthian king Phraates and then with Pompey.
143. *Tigranes' diadem ... prisoners*: It figured in Lucullus's triumph (ch. 36).
144. *over 100,000 infantry were killed*: Again (cf. n. 135) Plutarch's figure is probably too large. Orosius 6.3.6 says 30,000 (probably deriving from Livy, who did not minimize the Armenian force: cf. ch. 28 and n. 147); Phlegon, *FGrH* 257.12.10, gives only 5,000 dead. But those figures too may be corrupt or ill-informed.
145. *the philosopher Antiochus*: Antiochus of Ascalon, the influential eclectic philosopher (cf. *Brut.* 2). He had come to know Lucullus in the nineties or early eighties BCE (Cic. *Luc.* 11; cf. ch. 42 and n. 233), and he had been accompanying at least parts of the campaign since 74. On these references to 'philosophers' – the term presumably adds credibility, as philosophers are expected to be less credulous than others – cf. *Brut.* 1 and n. 12; 'Strabo the philosopher' again at *Caes.* 63.
146. *Strabo*: The Strabo whose *Geography* survives; he wrote under Augustus and Tiberius. This Historical Resume filled forty-seven books, beginning with 146 BCE.
147. *Livy*: Fr. 23 Hertz = 26 Jal, from the lost Book 98.
148. *destroyed him by slow attrition*: At Cyzicus (cf. esp. chs. 8, 11).
149. *the arrogant treatment he had received*: Ch. 22.
150. *a struggle ... Greeks eager to surrender*: App. *Mith.* 86 gives more details: there was fighting between the barbarians and the Greek mercenaries. Memnon, *FGrH* 434.57, oddly speaks of Mithridates' generals within the city surrendering it.
151. *800 drachmas to each man from the spoils*: Cf. ch. 37: placards at Lucullus's triumph recorded the gift of 950 (not 800) drachmas per man. But perhaps there was some second distribution.
152. *the artists of Dionysus*: Professional artists, formed together into several guilds (cf. *Ant.* 56–7 and n. 271 there). They often dwelt together in separate communities (notice Antony's gift of Priene at *Ant.* 57), and Tigranes would not have found them hard to collect.
153. *Arab kings arrived*: Dio 36.2.5, 40.20.1 names the Arab king as 'Alchaudonius', Strabo 16.753 as 'Alchaedamnus'.
154. *The Gordyeni ... with their wives and children*: A fine paradox: they willingly offer Lucullus what Tigranes had so outrageously imposed (n. 78).

155. *I have mentioned*: In ch. 21. Virtually all that is known about Zarbienus comes from this Life.
156. *the Parthian king*: Phraates III, who had succeeded to the throne in 70 BCE.
157. *a secret offer ... Mesopotamia*: The initiative may well have come from Tigranes and Mithridates, who were clearly courting the king. Sall. *Hist.* 4.69 M. = 67 McG. gives an elaborate and famous version of Mithridates' letter to him; cf. Memnon, *FGrH* 434.58.80. Tigranes had seized most of Mesopotamia from Parthia after the death of the great Parthian king Mithridates II in 87 BCE (cf. n. 78). Dio 36.3 here makes the Parthian king subtler, trying to play one side off against another to leave them evenly matched: that may be Dio's own guesswork, but the guess is intelligent.
158. *what a marvellous achievement ... another!*: Plutarch may well be exaggerating Lucullus's overconfidence here, for the whole story of his planned attack on Parthia is implausible (cf. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, p. 181). But it suits his themes, for a similar blustery arrogance had led Tigranes astray in 26 BCE (cf. n. 133). The point is marked by the insistent athletic imagery. Lucullus is competitive indeed. The comparison with Cimon should be felt, who was equally 'like an athlete' in fighting two battles on the same day (*Cim.* 13; and again at *Comp. Cim.–Luc.* 2: cf. Intro.).
159. *Sornatius*: Cf. n.85 and ch. 24. We are now in spring 68 BCE.
160. *in a difficult and mutinous frame of mind*: See ch. 24.
161. *another campaign ... in the height of summer*: In 68 BCE.
162. *Artaxias*: Artaxias I, originally the satrap of Antiochus III, proclaimed himself king of Armenia after Antiochus's defeat in 189 BCE (next n.).
163. *Antiochus's defeat by the Romans*: At Magnesia in 189 BCE. Hannibal, exiled from Carthage, had lived at Antiochus's court since 195. He then passed from one court to another, intermittently hounded by Rome, until he killed himself in Bithynia in 183 (cf. *Flam.* 20).
164. *the finest ... location of the country ... urged him to build*: Strabo 11.14.6 similarly stresses Artaxata's beauty and natural advantages: it was situated on a peninsula-like neck of land, with the River Araxes protecting it on nearly every side.
165. *three kings*: Presumably Tigranes, Mithridates (though this may be a mistake: see next n.) and the king of Atropatene.
166. *Mithridates ... fled immediately*: Surely a tendentious story. App. *Mith.* 87 gives the impression that Mithridates was not even present at the battle; he represents it as fought to prevent

Mithridates' army from linking with Tigranes.

167. *Livy ... those of nobler rank*: Fr. 24 Hertz = 27 Jal, from Book 98. Sallust also described this battle (*Hist.* 4.74, 76 M. = 72–3 McG.), and there are some indications that he was Plutarch's main source. Appian's account is rather different (*Mith.* 87, cf. previous n.): both he and Dio 36.4–6.1 suggest that Lucullus's success was less clear-cut than Plutarch makes out.
168. *around the autumn equinox*: September 68 BCE. Dio 36.6.3 appears to put the withdrawal to Nisibis earlier, in the summer. Orosius 6.3.7 agrees with Plutarch.
169. *Callimachus ... caused Lucullus such problems at Amisus*: Ch. 19.
170. *took the city by storm*: Plutarch's account is very brief, perhaps expressively so: Lucullus cannot take on Callimachus at the niceties of siegecraft, but this Roman answer is forceful and rapidly effective. Dio 36.6–7 has more details, suggesting a rather longer siege; Lucullus then timed the decisive attack for a stormy, moonless night, with the enemy off their guard.
171. *as if the favouring breeze had dropped*: Plutarch likes to identify such turning-points in his subjects' lives (cf. e.g. *Pomp.* 46, *Caes.* 15–17, *Ant.* 24–5). Here he has to strain: the campaigns of 68 BCE had already been unsuccessful enough, and the mutiny was no true turning-point (W. J. Tatum, *Athenaeum* 79 (1991), 569–79). But Lucullus's undiplomatic tactlessness with his troops prepares well for his return to politics, where his sun has equally set, and for similar reasons.
172. *Sallust traces ... back to the beginnings of the war*: *Hist.* fr. 5.10 M. = 4.70 McGushin. Sallust clearly treated the resentment in some detail (4.70–71, 5.10–15 M. = 4.68–70, 5.9–13 McG.). He is probably Plutarch's main source.
173. *Lucius Quinctius*: Cf. ch. 5 and n. 35; tribune in 74 BCE, he was now praetor in 68 or 67 (*MRR* ii.138; *PRR*, pp. 472–3). Sall. *Hist.* 4.71 M. = 68 McG. alleged that Lucullus had bribed, or tried to bribe, Quinctius to avoid the appointment of a successor. The allegation may well derive from Quinctius himself.
174. *successors ... Lucullus's provinces*: Asia had been removed from him in 69 BCE; in 68 he lost Cilicia, which was assigned to the consul Q. Marcius Rex. The rest were removed in 67 (ch. 35 and nn. 186, 191).
175. *Publius Clodius*: Cicero's famous adversary and *bête noir*, whose turbulent career was just beginning; he was about twenty-four years old. Appian Claudius (chs. 19–23) was his brother.
176. *Clodius's sister*: Clodia, the youngest of Clodius's three sisters, a striking woman. She has as strong a case as her elder sister Clodia Metelli, Cicero's target in the *Pro Caelio*, to be taken as Catullus's

'Lesbia'. She had married Lucullus around 75 BCE.

177. *the Fimbriani*: Cf. ch. 7.

178. *to kill the consul Flaccus ... as general instead*: Cf. nn. 21, 42–3.

179. *They were already settled ... wives and children*: Misleading, though that does not mean that Clodius did not say it. Pompey's troops may well have been granted land, probably by a Lex Plotia in 70 BCE, but implementation had been delayed (Dio 38.5.2). It may be that no land had been granted even by 59.

180. *some fugitives in Spain, some runaways in Italy*: A spectacularly ungenerous characterization of the war against Sertorius in 76–72 (*Pomp.* 17–21, *Sert.* 18–27), and the Spartacus rebellion to which he returned in 71 (*Pomp.* 21, *Crass.* 11).

181. *they stayed in Gordyene*: This is puzzling: the mutiny apparently took place in Nisibis (Dio 36.14.3–4), where Lucullus spent winter 68–7, not in Gordyene, his winter-quarters the previous year (chs. 29–30). Perhaps Plutarch, uninformed about Nisibis, simply assumed that Lucullus had returned to his previous camp. But it is possible that he is here conflating accounts of two mutinies, an alleged one in Gordyene in 69–8 and a real one in Nisibis in 68–7: so argues W. J. Tatum, *Athenaeum* 79 (1991), 569–79.

182. *Mithridates had defeated Fabius*: M. Fabius Hadrianus, left (it seems) in command of Lesser Armenia. This defeat was probably in autumn 68 BCE (*App. Mith.* 88, Dio 36.9); after it he was besieged in Cabeira.

183. *on the march against Sornatius and Triarius*: In ch. 30 Sornatius was having trouble in Pontus with his mutinous troops: he was presumably still there. C. Valerius Triarius, another of Lucullus's legates, tried to relieve Fabius at Cabeira (previous n.). He won some initial successes, which Plutarch here omits. Mithridates finally won a decisive victory, though he was wounded himself. Roman corpses still lay unburied three years later: cf. *Pomp.* 39, where Plutarch adds that Lucullus's failure to bury them contributed to his unpopularity.

184. *seize it before Lucullus could arrive*: Just as Tigranes had disastrously tried to strike before Mithridates' arrival in ch. 26. Once again, proceedings mirror one another on the two sides. But by now the enemy have learnt their lesson, as we see in the next paragraph.

185. *150 centurions and twenty-four military tribunes*: *App. Mith.* 89 agrees on the numbers of officer casualties.

186. *his provinces were already assigned to others*: Cf. the end of ch. 33 and n. 174. By now Lucullus had probably lost Pontus and Bithynia as well, transferred in 67 BCE to the consul M'. Acilius Glabrio, along with part of the army: *Sall. Hist.* 5.13 M. = 11

- McG. suggests that the mutineers made something of this.
187. *Lucullus stopped at nothing ... to win them back*: Particularly striking in view of the hauteur noted in ch. 33.
 188. *till the end of the summer*: 67 BCE. The narrative moves quickly through this inactive period (cf. n. 191).
 189. *His own dispatches ... destroyed*: Cf. ch. 11 for such brashness in reports to the senate.
 190. *senatorial envoys*: The regular ten-man commission sent to organize a new province.
 191. *Pompey ... appointed general of the war*: In early 66 BCE, by the Lex Manilia; Pompey also took over Bithynia from Glabrio (n. 186). In this ch. Plutarch glides over a delay of more than a year, in which the hamstrung Lucullus has to remain inactive.
 192. *they thought Lucullus had been treated outrageously*: The emphasis at *Pomp.* 30 is different and attuned to the themes of that Life. There the aristocrats certainly sympathize with Lucullus, but their dominant emotion is fear at Pompey's growing power.
 193. *ten commissioners*: See n. 190.
 194. *a village in Galatia*: It was called Danala (Strabo 12.567).
 195. *two triumphs*: From Africa in 80 BCE, from Spain in 71; he was shortly to add a third from the third continent, Asia. Cf. *Pomp.* 14, 22, and esp. 45; *Ant.* 21 and n. 126.
 196. *wreathed with laurel to celebrate their victories*: More precisely, to signify that each had been acclaimed as Imperator by his troops; such acclamations naturally followed victories. Cf. *Ant.* 43 and n. 231.
 197. *The two men talked, but no good came of it*: More detail, perhaps imaginary, at *Pomp.* 31 and Vell. 2.33.3: Lucullus pointed at Pompey's love of power, Pompey at Lucullus's love of money.
 198. *If only ... extended to ... Caspian Sea*: For Plutarch's taste for such 'virtual history' speculations cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 3 and n. 14 there.
 199. *what it proved to be at the time of Crassus*: Whose Parthian expedition was signally destroyed at Carrhae in 53 BCE (cf. *Crass.* 16–33). The question of Lucullus's model, developed here in the next paragraph, is only lightly touched in that Life (chs. 16, 18, 26).
 200. *Tigranes' captured diadem ... triumph*: Ch. 28 with n. 143.
 201. *returned to Rome*: In 66 BCE.
 202. *Gaius Memmius*: An interesting man, a poet and orator, and the dedicatee of Lucretius's great poem. He was Sulla's son-in-law, which made his stance in this prosecution delicate. He was probably now tribune. The attacks are discussed by J. Bellemore, *Historia* 45 (1996), 504–8; see also *Cato* 29 and n. 135.
 203. *as quaestor, when Marcus had been following Sulla's orders*: For

Marcus cf. ch. 1. He had perhaps been quaestor in 83 BCE, but his status in that year is uncertain (perhaps legate, cf. *Sull.* 27 and *MRR* ii.65), and Plutarch may here be confused.

204. *shifted his attack to Lucullus himself*: At *Cato* 29 Plutarch suggests he indicted Lucullus too, but this may be conflation of the two brothers. Perhaps Memmius was currying favour with Pompey, as Plutarch suggests at *Cato* 29; but that was an easy guess, and may not be reliable.
205. *most prominent and powerful citizens*: Cato played a leading role in supporting Lucullus (*Cato* 29), but Plutarch does not want to discuss politics here in such detail. Cato is interesting only for their private relationship (ch. 38).
206. *persuade the people to allow the triumph*: But it took a long time. The triumph was not celebrated until 63 BCE. Plutarch's compression of time in the chapter might give the impression that he 'dates' Lucullus's retirement to 66, the year of his return (n. 201): that is how T. P. Hillman reads the passage (*Historia* 42 (1993), 211–28), and he objects that Lucullus was only ineffective between 66 and 63 because he could not enter Rome before his triumph, and after 63 remained active for several more years. But Plutarch may not be dating the retirement so precisely, and may simply be passing quickly over material which, in a Life relatively uninterested in urban politics, he finds unpromising.
207. *the Flaminian Circus*: Built in 221 BCE by C. Flaminius, close to the Porta Fontinalis. It was used for triumphs among other purposes.
208. *the pirate war*: The command given Pompey in 67 BCE by the Lex Gabinia (*Pomp.* 24–9).
209. *950 drachmas ... to each soldier*: Ch. 29 and n. 151.
210. *Clodia*: Cf. ch. 34 and n. 176.
211. *Servilia, Cato's sister*: A mistake (if the text is right). This Servilia was probably Cato's niece (*Cato* 24 and n. 106 there), raising the possibility that we should emend the Greek and read 'niece' in both passages. She bore Lucullus a son, Marcus (*Cato* 24, 54).
212. *incest with her brother*: See ch. 34.
213. *full of hope ... glory and power*: As in the parallel Life, many at both Athens and Sparta welcomed Cimon as their champion against the menacing power of Themistocles (*Cim.* 5, 16); but Cimon, unlike Lucullus (ch. 42), did not let his followers down.
214. *there are those who praise him for this change of direction*: The balance of the rest of this chapter is interestingly generous (Intro.).
215. *Cimbrian victories*: In 104–101: *Mar.* 11–27. That Life makes much of Marius's unsatisfactorily persistent ambition (e.g. chs. 28, 34, 45–6) and its murderous consequences (esp. chs. 43–4).

216. *after Catiline*: In 63 BCE: *Cic.* 10–23. In that Life Plutarch similarly marks this as the turning-point in his fortunes (chs. 24, 28).
217. *Scipio ... Carthage*: Scipio Aemilianus, destroyer of Carthage in 146 and Numantia in 133. His final years were soured by domestic political discord, and he died mysteriously in 129 (*C. Gracch.* 10). He was in Plutarch's mind: he, rather than Scipio Africanus, was probably the subject of the opening Roman Life of the series (*Ti. Gracch.* 1 and n. 7 there; General Intro. I).
218. *too old for dissipation, not for politics or command*: The remark was Pompey's, uttered in 59 BCE according to *Pomp.* 48 (hence the unexplained grouping of 'the followers of Pompey and Crassus' here, for in that year the two men were temporarily united). Plutarch quotes it with some approval at *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* 785f–6a. Plutarch's own answer to that essay's question was a resounding 'yes'. Here Lucullus's behaviour is less clearly stigmatized (Intro.).
219. *like an Old Comedy*: Plutarch perfectly characterizes a rhythm that is typical of Aristophanes' comedies, with the first half often culminating in a fiercely contested debate and then the end celebrating with a party (*Acharnians*), a dance (*Wasps*) or the fulfilment of a dreamy fantasy, burning down the school (*Clouds*) or mastering the world (*Birds*).
220. *frivolity ... art collection*: Again an interesting emphasis, softening the disapproval. Plutarch counts a taste for art to a person's favour, as a sign of civilized Hellenism – even if, as usual, the art has been ransacked from the Greek world. Marcellus's looting of Syracuse is similarly treated with some indulgence (*Marcellus* 21).
221. *Lucullan gardens ... imperial parks*: They entered the imperial estate, it seems, when Messalina secured the death of their owner, Valerius Asiaticus, in 47 CE (*Tac. Ann.* 11.1). They lay on the Pincian Hill.
222. *Tubero*: Plutarch is probably thinking of Cicero's friend L. Aelius Tubero: he was an Academic (*Cic. Pro Ligario* 21), not a Stoic, but the mistake was easy in dealing with a philosopher contemptuous of wealth. Plutarch may also be confusing him with the more famous Q. Aelius Tubero, a noted Stoic in the second half of the second century BCE. Pliny *Natural History* 9.70 and Vell. 2.33.4 give the 'toga'd Xerxes' remark to Pompey himself. The evidence for and location of Lucullus's Campanian estates and buildings is discussed by V. Jolivet, *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 99 (1987), 875–904: they included the house once occupied by Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi (*C. Gracch.* 19 and n. 88).
223. *'the toga'd Xerxes'*: As the invading Xerxes famously reversed nature in 480 BCE, turning sea into land when bridging the

Hellespont, and turning land into sea when driving a canal through Athos.

224. *near Tusculum ... residence*: For an attempt to identify its site see G. McCracken, *American Journal of Archaeology* 46 (1942), 325–40.
225. *the poet Horace's remark ... invisible*: Horace *Epistles* 1.6.45–6, sardonically rounding off this same story: 'slender the house which lacks a great surplus, unknown to the master, a godsend for thieves.' Horace has told it slightly differently: asked for a hundred cloaks, Lucullus discovered he had 5,000, and offered as many as were wanted. It is most rare for Plutarch to quote Roman poetry (unlike Greek, which he quotes in profusion): he did not read Latin literature for pleasure, it seems (General Intro. III). Here the quotation is probably taken over from a source.
226. *his friend and relative*: See ch. 38.
227. *Some give the remark to someone else, not Cato himself*: Cf. *Cato* 19. There the remark is slightly different: '... you *build* like Lucullus'. That would be less appropriate here, where the buildings are treated more indulgently than the gluttony (n. 220). And it is given to 'Amnaeus', without qualification: again that would not suit here, where Cato's disapprobation carries particular weight.
228. *as if it was ... used at his will*: Tröster, *Themes, Character and Politics*, pp. 28–33, points out how Plutarch carefully distinguishes Lucullus's 'barbarian' over-ostentatious use of wealth from the more creditably 'Hellenic' cultural aspects of his retreat.
229. *collection of ... volumes*: According to Isidore *Etymologies* 6.5.1 the books originally came 'from the booty from Pontus', and it is credible enough that Lucullus, like other Roman generals before him, removed libraries from the Greek cities he took. Plutarch's bland words gloss over this darker aspect (S. Swain, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990), 144).
230. *The libraries were open to all*: Cf. the setting of Cic. *Fin.* 3: Cicero wanted to consult some books in this library (which was at Tusculum, cf. ch. 39), by then inherited by Lucullus's son. When Cicero arrived he found Cato there, surrounded by piles of books on Stoicism: so they fell to talking ... The library was also the setting for Cicero's *Hortensius*. The evidence for this library is collected and discussed by T. K. Dix, *Athenaeum* 88 (2000), 441–64.
231. *New Academy ... flourishing at the time*: The chronology is vague, and we have by now moved away from Lucullus's final years; 'from the outset' takes us back to his youth when Philo was still active, probably the nineties (J. Barnes in *Philosophia Togata*, ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (1989), p. 91).

232. *Philo's support of Carneades' teachings*: Carneades was head of the Academy in the middle of the second century BCE, and founder of the so-called 'New Academy'. Much of his distinctive teaching centred on the impossibility of ultimate verification of our perceptions, though he stressed that some things are more probable than others. Philo, head of the Academy from 110/09 until his death around 80, apparently maintained a similar position.
233. *Antiochus of Ascalon*: Cf. n. 145. After studying for some time with Philo, Antiochus broke with him in the eighties and veered away from the modified scepticism of the 'New Academy' (previous n.). He died in 68 or 67. At *Cic. 4* Plutarch speaks of Antiochus in cool terms, and his own views were closer to Philo.
234. *the Old Academy's champion ... students of Philo*: Plutarch echoes the language of ch. 38: his supporters wanted Lucullus as a political champion, but this was the fray he preferred. He probably has no better source for Lucullus's 'championing' of the cause than his knowledge of the contents of *Cic. Luc.* itself (n. 236) – possibly a vague knowledge, for it does not look as if he knew the work at first hand. If so, he took it all rather literally. Cf. Tröster, *Themes, Characters, and Politics*, pp. 31–2.
235. *Cicero*: Who had studied under both Philo and Antiochus (*Cic. 3–4*).
236. *'Lucullus'*: It is extant, the second book of the first edition of the *Academica*. Cicero later rewrote it, transferring the arguments from Lucullus to the more appropriate Varro: 'It is not that Lucullus was uneducated, but he was inexperienced,' presumably in the technicalities (*Cic. Att. 13.16.1*).
237. *As I have said*: In ch. 41.
238. *the senate's champions*: As usual in this *Life* (Intro.) the view of Roman politics is unsophisticated. Crassus and Cato were opposed to Pompey in very different ways, and the notion of them as 'the senate's champions' is crude.
239. *rejection of the dispositions ... was turned down*: Both wrangles took place in 60 BCE (*Pomp. 46, Cato 31*).
240. *friendship ... conspiracy*: The triple alliance of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar in 60 BCE, identified by Cato (*Pomp. 47*), Caelius (*Cic. Ad Fam. 8.14.2*), probably Pollio (Horace *Odes 2.1.1*) and many since as the real 'cause' of the Civil War.
241. *throwing the supporters ... out of the forum*: In 59 BCE; more details in *Pomp. 48, Cato 32 and Caes. 14*.
242. *Vettius ... plotting against Pompey*: L. Vettius, who had formerly served with Pompey, then was involved in the Catiline 'conspiracy' in 63 BCE. He denounced other prominent men in

summer 59 as well as Lucullus (cf. esp. Cic. *Att.* 2.24). But the affair is very obscure.

- 243. *Cicero ... exile and Cato ... Cyprus*: Both events took place in 58 BCE: more details at Cic. 30–32, *Cato* 34.
- 244. *Cornelius Nepos*: The biographer. This item (fr. 9.1 M.) presumably comes from a Life of Lucullus (cf. Intro.).
- 245. *to win his affections for Callisthenes*: As often in the Lives, the circumstances of the death faintly recall one of the hero's great moments, here the story told at *Cim.* 2 (Intro. *Luc.*). Plutarch tells the story again in *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* 792b–c, where he makes the moral clearer: it was the drift into luxury that left Lucullus so vulnerable.
- 246. *his brother Marcus*: Cf. ch. 1 and n. 11, and ch. 37.
- 247. *when he died*: In December 57 or January 56 BCE.
- 248. *buried Sulla*: In 78 BCE (G–C, p. 232). There was also a memorial to Sulla in the Campus Martius (*Sull.* 38), to bring the parallel even closer to onlookers' minds.
- 249. *Nor did Marcus ... survive much longer*: The precise date of his death is unknown.

Notes to the Comparison of Cimon and Lucullus

- 1. *Destiny*: See n. 24.
- 2. *Plato makes fun of the Orphics ... eternal drunkenness*: Plato *Republic* 2.363c–d.
- 3. *Xenocrates*: The pupil of Plato who became head of the Academy in 339 BCE. For Lucullus's 'special affection and enthusiasm for the Academy' see *Luc.* 42.
- 4. *his youth ... attracted criticism for its immorality*: *Cim.* 4.
- 5. *south wall of the Acropolis ... money brought in by Cimon*: *Cim.* 13.
- 6. *bed-chambers at Naples ... barbarian spoils*: *Luc.* 39.
- 7. *Cimon's table fed many people ... at small expense*: *Cim.* 10.
- 8. *Lucullus's cost a very great deal ... luxury-seekers*: *Luc.* 40–41.
- 9. *enjoyed his drink ... as I have said*: *Cim.* 4.
- 10. *Just as athletes ... on the same day*: *Cim.* 13, with the same image ('Just like a great athlete, Cimon has won two contests on the same day ...'). The pancration was a hand-to-hand fighting contest where nothing, or almost nothing, was barred.
- 11. *Lucullus was treated with scorn by his own soldiers*: See *Luc.* 24, 30 and esp. 32–5.
- 12. *both left the task unfinished*: The same point was made in the introduction to the pair at *Cim.* 3.
- 13. *as Plato put it*: Plato *Gorgias* 516d. Plato's point there was that the good statesman should be able to make his citizens better and

juster people: Cimon (like Miltiades, Themistocles and Pericles) had evidently been unable to achieve this. So democracies are recalcitrant things, and resent correctives – exactly Plutarch's point here.

14. *get beyond the Taurus in arms: Luc. 31.*
15. *crossed the Tigris: Luc. 24.*
16. *Tigranocerta ... Nisibis: Respectively Luc. 26–9, 15–8, 23, 32.*
17. *north ... Arabia: For the north, Luc. 33; for the east, ch. 31* (though 'Media' is not there named); *for the south, ch. 29, where the Arab kings come 'surrendering their lands'. 'Red Sea' sometimes means the modern Red Sea, but more often the Indian Ocean, including both the modern Red Sea and the Persian Gulf: that is probably what is meant here and at Pomp. 38.*
18. *defeat ... his great force in Egypt: In 454 BCE (Thucydides 1.109–10).*
19. *did not even venture out ... Pompey: See Pomp. 32, when Mithridates, 'with a fighting force of 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, still did not dare to offer battle'. Plutarch exaggerates: Mithridates initially stayed within his camp, but later, when cornered, led out his troops and fought.*
20. *fled to Bosphorus and ended his days there: See Pomp. 35–41.*
21. *took his diadem ... at Pompey's feet: See Pomp. 32, though there Plutarch, perhaps more carefully, describes Tigranes as removing his kitaris, another form of regal headdress.*
22. *emblems of kingship as ... before: As indeed Tigranes' diadem had been abandoned and captured (Luc. 28) and carried in Lucullus's triumph (Luc. 36). Plutarch refers here to the story he tells more fully at Pomp. 33: when Tigranes met Pompey and surrendered his regal headdress (previous n.), Pompey allowed him to continue in power provided he paid Rome an indemnity; Tigranes agreed, the Roman troops saluted him as king and Tigranes was relieved and overjoyed.*
23. *Themistocles ... Leotychidas: In 480–479 BCE, at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale respectively.*
24. *Heaven itself: The end of the epilogue reverts to the supernatural note with which it began ('Destiny ...'): the phrasing is vague in both cases, but it is enough to suggest that there is a supernatural perspective both to the history of Rome as a whole (the beginning) and to the lives of individuals within it (the end). At ch. 19 Lucullus had railed against Destiny; but at the end Heaven had perhaps not been so unkind.*
25. *indicating to the one ... threatened: That is, in the encouraging dreams and omens at Luc. 10, 12, 23 and 24, and the warning of Cimon's death at Cim. 18.*

YOUNGER CATO

Further Reading

A good English biography of Cato is still to be written; in German we have R. Fehrle, *Cato Uticensis* (1983). There is a valuable Italian commentary on the Life by Joseph Geiger in *Plutarco: Focione e Catone Uticense*, ed. and tr. C. Bearzot, J. Geiger and L. Ghilli (1993); J. Geiger's 'Munatius Rufus and Thrasea Paetus on Cato the Younger', *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 48–72, is also the best discussion of Plutarch's sources. Various aspects of the *Phocion–Cato* comparison are treated by Duff in *Plutarch's Lives*, pp. 131–60. Plutarch's treatment of Cato's philosophy is discussed by S. Swain in *Hermes* 118 (1990), 197–201, and more briefly by myself in *Philosophia Togata* i, ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (1989), pp. 228–30; other essays in that volume also address the role of philosophy in Roman politics more generally.

Notes to the Introduction to Younger Cato

1. For more details on the sequence of *Catos* and *Anticato*s see M. Gelzer, *Caesar*, tr. P. Needham (1968), pp. 301–4. C. P. Jones argues (*Rheinisches Museum* 113 (1970), 188–96) that Cicero's *Cato* was overall 'less than entirely favourable to its subject': if that is right, it is likely to be only in the sense that it may have been in dialogue form, and if so allowed other views to be heard (see also n. 4 below and chs. 11, 36, 44, 50, 52, 54, 57, with nn. 56, 191, 231, 259, 273, 282, 307).
2. M. T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (1976), pp. 190–94 (quotation from p. 190).
3. On this 'cult of suicide' see esp. M. T. Griffin, *G&R* 33 (1986), 64–77, 192–202.
4. This is what Cicero says in a surviving letter to Atticus (2.1.8). But that letter dates from 60 BCE, well before that failure to win the consulship of 51 (chs. 49–50). Plutarch is presumably misremembering or adapting, possibly fusing that letter with the other work of Cicero that he quotes at ch. 50 – unless Cicero himself repeated his 'Plato's *Republic*' gibe in that second work. Jones (*Rheinisches Museum* 113 (1970), 192–3) suggests that it comes from Cicero's *Cato*, and this is one of his reasons for suggesting that the work was not wholly laudatory; but Cicero perhaps phrased the point less waspishly in that work, if it is indeed the source, than in the letter – it could easily be recast as a compliment.

5. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, pp. 155–8 (quotation from p. 157).
6. See esp. D. Babut, *Plutarque et le Stoicisme* (1969), and more briefly D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (1973), chs. 4–5, esp. pp. 68–71 and 88–9.
7. On Stoicism and suicide, see Griffin, *G&R* 33 (1986), 67–8, 72–5: '[f]or them, provided the *moment* and the *reason* were right, a man was justified in making a rational departure from life' (p. 72).
8. For other echoes of the *Symposium* see Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 143.
9. Others too brought the pair together, including Cic. *Tusculanae disputationes* 1.74, Florus *Anthologia Latina* 243, and Seneca on many occasions, e.g. *De tranquillitate animi* 17.4, *De beneficiis* 5.7.5, *Epistulae* 71.16–17, 104.29. See Griffin, *G&R* 33 (1986), 195–6.
10. On this see Geiger, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 48–72 (see also nn. 45, 132, 192, 201). An Oxyrhynchus papyrus (*POxy* lxxii.4940; 2010) overlaps closely with *Cato* 35: in its publication in *POxy* I suggest that this is a fragment of Munatius (nothing precludes his writing in Greek), reproducing a dialogue in which Ptolemy's friends argue for and against taking Cato's advice to return home. Another possibility is that it is a fragment of the Augustan writer Timagenes (*Ant.* 72 and n. 345), who in that case might himself be following Munatius.
11. As Geiger speculates, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 65–7.
12. E.g. Seneca *Controversiae* 8.4, 10.1.8, 10.3.5, *Suasoriae* 6.1–2, 4, 10; Quintilian 3.5.8–13, 5.11.10, 8.2.9, 10.5.13, 12.7.4.
13. Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 377–82.
14. H. Erbse, *Hermes* 84 (1956), 278–424, argued along these lines.

Notes to Younger Cato

1. *I have explained in his own Life*: That is, the *Elder Cato*, which ends (ch. 27) with much the same language as used here: 'He was great-grandfather of the philosopher Cato, a man who was the most prominent of his generation in virtue and in fame.'
2. *left an orphan*: His parents were Livia, daughter of the M. Livius Drusus who was censor in 112 BCE, and M. Porcius Cato, who died between 95 and 91.
3. *his brother Caepio*: In fact only a half-brother: like Servilia, he was a child of his mother's first marriage to Q. Servilius Caepio.
4. *his sister Porcia*: She was to marry L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul in 54 BCE (ch. 41).
5. *Servilia*: The future lover of Caesar (ch. 24 and n. 105) and

mother of Caesar's murderer Brutus (see n. 143 for the rest of her family).

6. *who was his mother's uncle*: If Plutarch wrote this, he was wrong: Livius Drusus was Cato's mother's brother, not her uncle. But perhaps the text should be corrected to 'uncle on his mother's side'.
7. *Livius Drusus ... leading politician of the day*: The tribune of the plebs in 91 BCE and a leading player in the political crisis which led to the outbreak of the Social War. He was assassinated in the closing months of that tribunate. Plutarch's approval for his political line reflects what he would have regarded as its moderation, for he proposed land-distributions and colonies to help the poor, the enfranchisement of all Italians, and the raising of 300 knights to the senate (G–C, pp. 128–36).
8. *the gifted ... retentive*: This distinction is Aristotelian, and elaborated at the beginning of *On memory and remembering* (449b4–8, 453a4–b6). The point is that those who can 'bring things back to mind' go through a conscious process of retrieving things to their mental screen from the back of their minds, whereas those with 'retentive memories' have never lost them in the first place.
9. *allies of Rome*: Livius Drusus (n. 7) was one of their principal supporters, though if a story of Diod. 37.13 can be trusted Poppaedi (next n.) was at one stage in favour of more violent measures than Drusus's diplomatic approach. The citizenship was eventually granted in 89 BCE, two years after Drusus's death (G–C, pp. 151–2).
10. *Poppaedi Silo*: The Marsian noble Quintus Poppaedi Silo, who after Drusus's death won several victories as an allied commander in 90 and 89; he was eventually defeated and killed by Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius in 88 (G–C, pp. 142–5, 159, 167–8). If the story of the open window is historical, it must pre-date Drusus's death in 91, so Cato would be less than four years old.
11. *the lusus Troiae*: This is most familiar from *Aen.* 5.545–603, where Virgil makes Aeneas institute a version of this equestrian ceremony in Sicily. It probably originally had nothing to do with Troy, but its name invited antiquarian revivals: after Sulla, Julius Caesar also staged one, and performances became regular under Augustus and the early emperors.
12. *boys were willing ... son of Sulla's wife Metella*: The boys were wise: Sulla was known to hold his wife in great honour (*Sull.* 6, 13). This son of Metella was probably M. Aemilius Scaurus, the future praetor of 56 BCE, who would have been a year or so older than Cato: his father, Metella's previous husband, was the M. Aemilius

Scaurus who was consul in 115 and censor in 109.

13. *Pompey's nephew Sextus*: Plutarch's phrasing suggests a nephew of Pompey the Great, but in fact it is likely to be a nephew of Pompey's father, Pompeius Strabo, the consul of 89 BCE, and therefore Pompey's cousin. He may be the same Sextus Pompeius who eventually became consul in 35, but if so he had a slow career.
14. *Cato was thirteen years old*: So we are in 82 or 81 BCE. The terror of the proscriptions is described at *Sull.* 31 (cf. G–C, pp. 198–200, 211–12).
15. *'Why not give me a sword ... liberate my country?'* The same story is told by Val. Max. 3.1.2, except that Sarpedon there says that 'it is not that people don't want to kill him, only that they don't have the chance', given that Sulla is so closely guarded. That makes the point slightly clearer: Cato could do it because he, exceptionally, had access to the tyrant.
16. *'My brother' ... gave up*: The fraternal affection of Cato and Caepio is also mentioned in Plutarch's *On brotherly love*, and illustrated with a different anecdote (487c–d).
17. *This Sittius ... decadent lifestyle*: Probably the Sittius who was associated with Catiline (*Sall. Cat.* 21) and went on to hold a Caesarian command in Africa during the Civil War. He had to sell off a large part of his property to cover his debts (*Cic. Pro Sull.* 56–9).
18. *priest of Apollo*: I.e. one of the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* ('college of fifteen entrusted with ritual'). The date of Cato's appointment is uncertain, but the present story suggests that it was around 75 BCE.
19. *120 talents*: I.e. 720,000 denarii or 2,880,000 sesterces – perhaps a rounding of 3 million.
20. *Antipater ... philosopher*: We know little about him, but he wrote at least eight books *On the Universe*; he also criticized Panaetius for neglecting the topic of preserving one's health and one's estate (*Cic. Off.* 2.86).
21. *tool for dealing with the people*: Plutarch's own view of rhetoric was similar (*Advice on Public Life* 801c–2e), and he speaks elsewhere approvingly of those who cultivated rhetoric for the same reason (*Fabius* 1, *Elder Cato* 1, *Cic.* 33).
22. *'Basilica Porcia' ... elder Cato as censor*: The basilica was 'next to the forum, below the senate-house', and had attracted controversy since its building in 192 BCE (*Elder Cato* 19).
23. *correct, emotional and hard-hitting*: At *Brut.* 118 Cicero makes his 'Brutus' praise Cato as unusually eloquent for a Stoic, and in the proem to *Stoic Paradoxes* he comments on the rhetorical

adornments Cato would use when presenting Stoic views on 'greatness of soul, or moderation, or death, or praise of virtue, or the immortal gods, or patriotism'.

24. *he would often speak all day without respite*: A reference to the tactic of filibustering by talking out the day so that no decision could be reached (cf. chs. 31, 33, 43 and n. 158; Lintott, *Constitution*, p. 78). It was effective because senatorial decrees passed after sunset were not valid. Plutarch does not bring out the constitutional aspect here, but that does not mean that he did not understand it: the tactic *did* require physical fitness, and that is what is relevant here.
25. *as they rode and he walked at their side*: Plutarch is probably generalizing from the stories he tells at chs. 9 and 13.
26. *if Aphrodite did not wish it*: The highest throw at dice was known as the 'Venus'.
27. *at night he could talk to philosophers over the wine*: Plutarch gives a similar conversational excuse for the extreme drinking habits of Alexander the Great, *Alex.* 23 (though he rejects it in *Table Talk* 1.6). Cato's drinking habits clearly figured heavily in Caesar's *Anticato* or *Anticatos* (Intro.).
28. *Memmius*: See ch. 29.
29. *type of purple*: This may refer to the purple border of the *toga praetexta*, worn by aristocratic young men and by the holders of curule magistracies.
30. *without shoes or tunic*: Probably generalizing from Cato's demeanour as praetor, ch. 44.
31. *100 talents*: I.e. 600,000 denarii = 2,400,000 sesterces, perhaps a rounding of two and a half million.
32. *old enough to marry*: This would be around 75 BCE, if he had a marriageable daughter by the late sixties (ch. 25).
33. *Lepida*: Not otherwise known; possibly the daughter of Mamilius Aemilius Lepidus, consul in 77 BCE.
34. *Metellus Scipio*: Later to be a major player in the politics of the fifties BCE (nn. 245, 248); his daughter Cornelia, presumably by this marriage to Lepida, was to marry Pompey in 52 (*Pomp.* 55). Despite their animosity, he and Cato co-operated in the final Africa campaign (chs. 57–62).
35. *poured abuse on Scipio*: Scipio replied in kind (ch. 57).
36. *Archilochus ... obscenities*: Iambi were the traditional metrical vehicle for abuse, and Archilochus their classic exponent.
37. *Atilia*: She too is not otherwise known: perhaps the daughter of C. Atilius Serranus, the consul of 106 BCE. For her loose-living later life see ch. 24.
38. *Scipio's friend Laelius*: For Laelius and his famous friendship with

Scipio Aemilianus, see *Ti. Gracch.* 8 and n. 35. We do not know the name of his wife.

39. *Laelius ... different stages of his life*: One of those moments where Plutarch's own personality shows through: it is striking how many of those moments come when women and married life are in point, as for instance in his sympathetic portrayal of Pompey's uxoriousness and loving marriages, *Pomp.* 53, 55, 75; see also *Intro. Gracch.* The reference is not however casual: it prepares for the criticism of Cato's own more questionable approach to his womanfolk at later times, chs. 25, 52.
40. *the 'Spartacus War', as they called it*: In 73–71 (*Crass.* 8–10, *Pomp.* 17–20, and G–C, pp. 261–9).
41. *Gellius held the command*: L. Gellius Publicola, consul in 72 BCE along with Cn. Cornelius Lentulus. Both consuls were defeated by Spartacus, and the senate terminated their commands: *MRR* ii.116.
42. *nomenclatores*: I.e. attendants to tell them the names of those they met in the street when canvassing. This law was perhaps the *Lex Aurelia de Ambitu* of, probably, 70 BCE. It was soon modified, but it, or something like it, was apparently reimposed in 52 (ch. 49 and n. 257).
43. *duly elected military tribune*: *MRR* ii.147 and 150, n. 12, dates this tribunate to either 67 or 66 BCE, but it may be a year or so earlier (n. 50).
44. *Rubrius*: Nothing more is known about this man: *MRR* ii.147 and 150, n. 12.
45. *Munatius*: Munatius Rufus; the first mention of the philosopher-friend of Cato who will play a large part in the Life. Much of Plutarch's material, including presumably the present anecdote, will come originally from his *Memoirs* (*Intro.*).
46. *he would always walk ... in turn*: Cf. ch. 5; the language here is closely similar.
47. *gave his men justifications ... his orders*: Thus reflecting his own expectations of his teachers, ch. 1.
48. *the thing that Cato least cared about was what he most gained*: Similar language to the peroration of Sallust's digression comparing the virtue of Cato with that of Caesar (*Intro.*): 'The less he pursued glory, the more it attended upon him' (*Sall. Cat.* 54.6). There are some signs that Plutarch had used Sallust for the earlier *Cicero* (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 46–7, 60, nn. 12–13): possibly the phrase lodged in his mind, or his notes, from then.
49. *Athenodorus Cordylion*: A native of Tarsus, Athenodorus had become director of the library at Pergamum. *Diog. Laert.* 7.34 reports the story that he dealt with unwelcome passages in the

writings of the older Stoics by removing them from the texts: he was found out, and the extracts were restored.

50. *Pompey ... kingdoms*: Pompey took up his command against the pirates in 67 BCE, then succeeded Lucullus in 66. This passage was the reason why Broughton in *MRR* ii.150, n. 12, dated Cato's military tribunate to one of those two years, when both generals were operating. That is insecure, as Plutarch may well have imaginatively put this exuberant reflection in Cato's mouth or mind himself, and we cannot be sure that he knew the exact date. A year or so earlier is possible.
51. *Cato ... more splendid still*: Athenodorus later lived in Cato's house at Rome (ch. 16), and died there (Strabo 14.5.14). Plutarch again refers admiringly to Cato's journey to Athenodorus at *The Philosopher Should Particularly Converse with Princes* 777a.
52. *Aenus, a town in Thrace*: At the mouth of the River Hebrus (Evros). Caepio was probably travelling to serve under either Lucullus or Pompey.
53. *Caepio had just died*: On the date, see n. 50.
54. *8 talents*: 48,000 drachmas/denarii = 192,000 sesterces: perhaps a rounding for 200,000 sesterces, but it is equally likely that the sum was originally expressed in talents.
55. *Caepio's young daughter*: Servilia, later to be Lucullus's husband (ch. 24 and n. 106).
56. *someone*: Evidently Caesar, in his *Anticato(s)* (Intro.). It was Caesar's position above the law that gives point to 'did not have to fear any consequences or cross-examination'. The non-naming is interesting, as the reader is clearly expected to realize who is meant: it may be parallel to a technique in oratory, where Clodius (say) may be dismissively referred to just as 'that bandit'. A passage in ch. 44 looks like a similar case (n. 231).
57. *Deiotarus of Galatia*: In a letter to Cato of 51–50 BCE Cicero similarly refers to 'King Deiotarus, to whom you above all have a close relationship' (*Ad Fam.* 15.4.15): cf. ch. 15. Deiotarus was a 'loyal Roman ally' (*OCD*³), which served him in good stead against his enemy Mithridates of Pontus; he was rewarded by Pompey in 63 by an increase in his territory. In 45 BCE Cicero spoke in his defence when his Roman enemies brought him to trial before Caesar, and the speech survives.
58. *a funny thing that happened in Syria*: J. Bellemore, *Historia* 44 (1995), 377, points out that Syrian Antioch is hardly on Cato's route from Macedonia to Galatia, and suggests that Plutarch confused this with one of the other Antiochs, in Caria or Pisidia. But we do not know how widely Cato's Asian sightseeing (ch. 13) ranged.

59. *Demetrius ... slave of Pompey*: By now he was naturally a freedman rather than a slave. He had a sumptuous estate in Rome (*Pomp.* 40), and left an estate of 4,000 talents, a massive sum (*Pomp.* 2). *Pomp.* 40 repeats the story of this incident at Antioch, adding that Demetrius's arrogant behaviour contrasted with the courtesy which Pompey himself regularly showed to provincials – a rather different contrast from that which the transition to ch. 14 here suggests.
60. *'What an ill-starred city!'*: It is left nicely ambiguous which city is meant, Antioch or Rome.
61. *for protection on the journey*: As Bellemore says (*Historia* 44 (1995), 378), this suggests that Cato was on his way home, and if so the episode postdates the visit to Deiotarus (ch. 16).
62. *his wife and children (they were related to him as well)*: Pompey's wife at the time was Mucia; their children were Cn. Pompeius and Pompeia, both in or approaching their early teens, and Sextus, probably still an infant. It is unclear how they were related to Cato (cf. n. 336).
63. *Curio*: Possibly C. Scribonius Curio, the consul of 76 BCE; possibly his son, the tribune of 50 (cf. nn. 244, 264, 276). The son would be closer to Cato in age but hardly in temperament: cf. *Ant.* 2 for his youthful excesses. If they were indeed friends, that will explain why he would have liked Cato to be more agreeable; but they were not likely to be friends, and perhaps this is more likely to be the father.
64. *sense of the word he used*: In the Loeb edition B. Perrin suggests that Plutarch is translating the Latin *mansuetior*: the Greek similarly means, literally, 'more tame'.
65. *Deiotarus of Galatia*: See n. 57.
66. *Pessinus*: Near the western border of Galatia.
67. *Athenodorus*: See n. 49.
68. *quaestorship*: Cato held this either in 64 BCE (*MRR* ii.163 and 165, n. 5) or in 65, when Catulus became censor (see the discussion at *MRR* iii.170–71).
69. *Lutatius Catulus ... moral insight*: Q. Lutatius Catulus, the consul of 78 BCE; his censorship is dated to 65, but may have gone on into 64 (*MRR* iii.171). On his moral reputation see also *Galb.* 3 and *Pomp.* 15, 16; he was often on the same moral and political side as Cato (e.g. *Caes.* 8), and had a similar record of confronting the powerful individuals Pompey and Caesar (*Pomp.* 25, 30, *Caes.* 6, 7). Plutarch tells the tale of the law-suit again at *Shame Can be a Bad Thing* 534d and *Advice on Public Life* 808e, in neither case adding the complicating detail about Lollius.
70. *Marcus Lollius*: Nothing more is known of him except this

quaestorship (*MRR* ii.162), unless he is the man (or the son of the man) who was similarly prevented by disease from attending the trial of Verres (*Cic. Verres* 2.3.63).

71. *12,000 drachmae*: 2 talents (which is the way it is put at *Sull.* 31) = 48,000 sesterces, perhaps a rounding for 50,000. For the proscriptions see n. 14.
72. *hauled before the courts and punished*: We know of two names, L. Annius Bellienus and L. Luscius, both brought before Julius Caesar as president of the court (*Asconius in toga candida* 90–91 C, cf. *Suet. Iul.* 11 and *Dio* 37.10). Catiline was brought before the same court but acquitted.
73. *his colleague Marcellus*: Possibly one of the three Claudii Marcelli who were consuls in 51, 50 and 49 BCE: all were committed optimates, which suits ‘their friendship survived intact to the end’ here. All three were stronger characters when consuls than this anecdote suggests, but 1. it has doubtless been improved in the telling, 2. however strong-minded, they might be less so than Cato, and 3. they might anyway have been all too willing to bend the law in a friend’s favour.
74. *5 talents*: 120,000 sesterces, a huge sum.
75. *first to arrive ... last to depart*: As at the treasury, ch. 18.
76. *appropriate sphere of action ... virtue*: And therefore he served Plutarch as a model for the most assiduous type of statesman, *Advice on Public Life* 811a.
77. *Clodius the demagogue*: *Luc.* 34 and n. 175.
78. *Fabia ... conviction*: Fabia, the sister (or half-sister or possibly cousin) of Terentia, was a Vestal Virgin who was accused in 73 BCE of adultery with Catiline, and was acquitted. If this reference is to the same case (it may not be), Plutarch has moved back considerably in his time-line. The charge against Licinia, accused and acquitted similarly of adultery with Crassus (*Crass.* 1), was probably part of the same case in 73.
79. *Amnaeus*: Not otherwise known. *Luc.* 40 has a similar story, with slight differences (see n. 227 there): there the remark is made by Cato himself with the additional note, ‘Some give the remark to someone else, not Cato himself.’ Here it is evidently better to make someone else the speaker: the point is how others regarded Cato, not how he regarded himself.
80. *known as ‘Catos’*: So the manuscripts, but in his Teubner edition (revised ed., 1995) K. Ziegler emends to ‘Pseudocatos’, a phrase used by Cicero in a letter of 61 BCE (*Att.* 1.14.6). But *Val. Max.* 2.10.8 at least shows that high-minded people could be known as ‘Catos’; cf. also ch. 64, ‘if they were not Catos themselves ...’
81. *to stand for the tribunate of the plebs*: This was in 63 BCE, and the

candidature would be for the tribunate of 62.

82. *Metellus Nepos*: Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos, whose antagonism with both Cato and Cicero will be a major theme of the next few years. He had been legate of Pompey in the East since 67 BCE, and was presumably returning from that command. He did indeed support Pompey as tribune in 62, trying unsuccessfully to secure a special command for him against the Catilinarians. He was to be consul in 57, where he would again propose a command for Pompey, this time the *cura annonae*.
83. *the one who is opposed ... carries the day*: See *Ti. Gracch.* 10 with (for Plutarch's misunderstanding) n. 46 there.
84. *consular elections were at hand*: In July 63 BCE. The prominent candidate that Plutarch does not mention here was Catiline; Cicero was already scaremongering against him, making a show of wearing a breastplate to indicate his fear of an assassination attempt.
85. *Silanus*: D. Iunius Silanus, who was duly elected consul for 62 BCE. He is best known for his role in the debate on the conspirators (chs. 22–3).
86. *Servilia*: See n. 5.
87. *Lucius Murena*: L. Licinius Murena, previously prominent as a legate of Lucullus (*Luc.* 15, 19, 25, 27 and n. 80); he was now elected consul along with Silanus. The other leader in the prosecution was his defeated competitor Ser. Sulpicius Rufus (n. 256).
88. *when the case came to court*: At the end of November, 63.
89. *making fun of ... 'Stoic paradoxes'*: *Cic. Pro Murena*, esp. 60–66.
90. *jurors were laughing*: When he tells the story at *Comp. Dem.–Cic.* 1, Plutarch adds that the laughter began in the surrounding crowd (the *corona*), then spread to the jurors. Eighteen years later Cicero treated the same topics in *De Finibus*, addressing Cato: 'This time I will not treat the matter jocularly, as I did when defending Murena: all that was said for non-experts, and there was some concession to the *corona* as well. Now we must talk in a more nuanced way' (4.74).
91. *what a comic consul we have!*: The Greek (like the Latin original, if it was *quam ridiculum habemus consulem!*) is ambiguous between 'what a comedian we have for a consul!' and 'what a ridiculous consul we have!'.
92. *treat him with ... confidence*: Cf. the incident in ch. 28.
93. *Before his tribunate began*: It began on 10 December 63 BCE.
94. *By now he ... had left the city*: On the night of 7 or 8 November 63 BCE, following the senatorial debate where Cicero delivered the *First Catilinarian*.

95. *Lentulus, Cethegus ... conspiracy*: P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura was praetor in 74 and consul in 71; then he was expelled from the senate by the censors of 70 and re-entered in 63 as praetor for the second time; C. Cornelius Cethegus was a senator in 63, was alleged to have been Cicero's putative assassin and his house was claimed to be the conspirators' arsenal. He was executed on 5 December. It remains doubtful how closely associated Lentulus and Cethegus were with Catiline, and indeed how much of a 'conspiracy' there really was (see esp. R. Seager, *Historia* 22 (1973), 240–48).
96. *as I have related in Cicero*: *Cic.* 11–22. I discuss Plutarch's various versions of the conspiracy in Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 45–63.
97. *the senate debated what to do*: 5 December 63 BCE.
98. *Silanus*: See n. 85. Silanus was the first to speak because he was consul designate for 62 BCE.
99. *proposed imprisonment instead*: *Cic.* 21 shows that Plutarch assumed that the imprisonment was to be temporary, 'until such time as Catiline is defeated in battle'; *Caes.* 7 suggests the same: 'keep them under guard for the duration of the war'. Other authors, esp. *Cic. Cat.* 4.8 and 10 and *Sall. Cat.* 51.43, give the impression that Caesar proposed permanent imprisonment, and that is probably right.
100. *everyone rushing ... course*: So also *Caes.* 8, saying that all who spoke after Caesar supported him, many of those who spoke before changed their view. But *Sall. Cat.* 52.1, 'The others indicated in a word which side they took, some supporting one and some the other,' suggests that opinion was more divided.
101. *But then Cato rose to his feet*: In fact the senior consular Q. Lutatius Catulus (n. 69) was the first to stem the tide, as *Cic.* 21 shows, but Cato's speech was clearly particularly effective.
102. *it should be enough ... for his past activities*: *Cic.* 21, *Caes.* 8 and *Brut.* 5 agree that Cato tried to cast suspicion on Caesar himself. This may also be implied by *Sall. Cat.* 52.16, 'If Caesar alone is fearless when everyone else is so fearful, that gives me all the greater reason to fear for you and for me,' but it is likely that Cato's speech made a good deal more of this than Sallust's obliquity would suggest.
103. *some short-hand symbols ... senate-house*: A system of short-hand was later known as 'Tiro's notation' after Cicero's secretary Tiro. The point of having several scribes was presumably that they would all miss some things, but a collation would then provide a better record.
104. *include even tiny indications ... sketching an image of the soul*: Plutarch likes parallels with portrait-painting (esp. *Cim.* 2,

General Intro. II), especially the notion of behaviour as giving ‘signs of the soul’ (Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*, pp. 16, 163–4): this goes naturally with the idea that small things can be especially significant of character (*Alex.* 1). The precise formulation here – that tiny indications can sketch a great deal quickly – may pick up on the language used of the short-hand secretaries.

105. *Servilia*: See ch. 1 and n. 5. Plutarch tells this story again at *Brut.* 5.
106. *Servilia, Cato’s sister*: A mistake, if the text is right: in fact this was Cato’s niece (*Luc.* 38 and n. 211), the ‘young daughter’ of Caepio mentioned as Cato’s co-heir in ch. 11 (n. 55). But if Plutarch was mistaken (or deliberately misleading, as A.-C. Harders thinks, *Historia* 56 (2007), 453–61), it is odd that he did not mention this presumed second sister in ch. 1, and the simple ‘Cato’s sister’ here is also strange after so much on the sister Servilia. Perhaps we should emend the Greek (*adelphide* for *adelphe*) and read ‘niece’ in both cases and at chs. 29 and 54 (where ‘niece’ is in fact a variant reading).
107. *thrown out ... immoral behaviour*: *Luc.* 38; ‘thrown out of the house’ effectively means ‘divorced’, but the colour of the language should not be lost in a weak translation, here or in ‘throw her out’ a sentence later.
108. *Atilia*: See ch. 7 and n. 37. The divorce must have taken place some time before 60 BCE, if Marcia had time to bear two children and be pregnant with a third by 56 or shortly afterwards (nn. 117, 118); it is probably best to assume it had taken place by 62, and the ‘wife’ of chs. 27 and 30 is Marcia.
109. *two children*: These were Porcia, wife of Bibulus (ch. 25) and then of Brutus, and the son who figures prominently in the final chapters (52, 65–73).
110. *Marcia, the daughter of Philippus*: Marcia is known only as Cato’s wife; for her later role in the Life see chs. 27, 30, 37, 52. L. Marcius Philippus was praetor in 62, consul in 56 and (by his marriage to Atia, later than that to Marcia’s mother) stepfather of the emperor Augustus.
111. *most debate ... as in a drama*: A rare indication of the power of tragedy to make its audience think about deep ethical questions. Normally when Plutarch used tragic figures they suggest rather the ‘theatrical’, something showy and sensational. The moral issues raised by this marriage made it a test-case for debate in the rhetorical schools (Quintilian 3.5.11, 10.5.13).
112. *Thraseda*: Thraseda Paetus, prominent in the ‘philosophical opposition’ to the emperor Nero, who wrote a Life of his hero Cato (Intro.).

113. *Munatius*: See n. 45.
114. *Quintus Hortensius ... high reputation*: The consul of 69 BCE and the most renowned orator in Rome until the emergence of Cicero. By the time of this marriage to Marcia (56 or shortly after, n. 118) he was in his late fifties. From his first marriage with Lutatia, daughter of the consul of 102, he already had at least two children. He died in 50, and soon after Marcia returned to Cato (ch. 52).
115. *Porcia*: Daughter of Atilia (n. 109). If she had two children by 56 BCE or so (and one was old enough to be a candidate for the augurship in 43, *Brut.* 13 and n. 84), the marriage presumably took place in the late sixties. For her later marriage to Brutus see *Brut.* 13 and nn. there.
116. *Bibulus*: M. Calpurnius Bibulus, Caesar's unfortunate colleague in the consulship of 59 BCE (chs. 31–2). See chs. 47 and 54 for later co-operation with his father-in-law Cato.
117. *Cato had enough children already*: Two by Atilia (ch. 24 and n. 109) and by this time three (or two and the unborn child) by Marcia (Lucan 2.331).
118. *All this happened later*: Clearly not before 56 BCE (ch. 37 and n. 195), but probably then or not long after.
119. *extend the corn-dole ... ineligible*: The corn-dole had begun with C. Gracchus (*C. Gracch.* 5 and n. 29), but the bill now in force was the Lex Terentia Cassia of 73 BCE. This apparently fixed distributions of 5 *modii* a month for a precise number of recipients, perhaps 40,000. Plutarch's language here suggests that Cato's bill simply extended this on the same terms to a larger number, probably between 130,000 and 190,000. The complicated issues are treated by G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (1980), pp. 166–72, and I discuss Plutarch's evidence in 'Rowland and Cullens on corn-doles', *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 14.8 (1989), 117–19.
120. *1,250 talents a year*: *Caes.* 8 says 7,500,000 drachmas (= denarii), the Roman equivalent. This should be taken as the *extra* cost, over and above the commitment under the Lex Terentia Cassia (previous n.).
121. *Metellus*: Q. Metellus Nepos; see ch. 20 and n. 82. He was tribune in 62 BCE (*MRR* ii.174), entering office on 10 December 63.
122. *launched himself into*: The same phrase recurs three times in this chapter: that is probably not careless writing but a way of capturing the rhythm of attack and counter-attack (or rather expected counter-attack, as Cato refuses to respond in kind), and so I have kept the repetition in translation.
123. *recall Pompey ... with all speed*: After defeating Mithridates,

Pompey was now on his way back. There was great nervousness that he might not demobilize his army on his return; in the event Pompey dismissed his men after disembarking in Italy, and proved the fears false (*Pomp.* 43).

124. *save it from ... Catiline*: In the earlier *Cicero* Plutarch had phrased the proposal as ‘to summon Pompey back from his campaign in order to destroy the domination of Cicero’, and Cato’s opposition is similarly put as ‘exalting Cicero’s consulship’ (23.4–5). In this *Life* the theme of support for Cicero is much more muted (ch. 22), and the relevant accusations of monarchic power are those directed at Cato himself (ch. 29).
125. *make him master of the empire*: It may have included the proposal that Pompey should be elected consul in his absence.
126. *When the senate convened*: In January 62 BCE.
127. *his wife*: Probably Marcia rather than Atilia (ch. 22 and n. 108).
128. *sisters*: Presumably Porcia and Servilia (ch. 1 and nn. 4 and 5), and perhaps the other Servilia as well (ch. 22, but see n. 106); cf. ch. 29.
129. *unperturbed ... hopeful*: The scene plays out in anticipation the final hours at Utica (chs. 66–8), but this time all turns out well.
130. *Minucius Thermus*: Like Cato, a tribune of 62 BCE (*MRR* ii.174). He went on to hold a praetorship, perhaps as early as 60–58 (*PRR*, pp. 569–70), and to govern Asia at the end of the fifties.
131. *the Temple of Castor and Pollux*: On the south-east corner of the forum, with a tribunal before it. The temple and the space outside was the centre of much political activity, including senate-meetings, voting assemblies and informal public addresses (*contiones*). It was the scene of violence again in 59 BCE (ch. 33).
132. *Munatius*: Munatius Rufus (ch. 9 and n. 45) is by now so familiar a companion that his presence on the scene can be taken as read. He may well be Plutarch’s source for these events – indeed, the mention of his name may discreetly indicate as much (cf. *Brut.* 2, 13, 53, *Ant.* 25, with Intros. *Brut.* and *Ant.*).
133. *Cato stopped him ... from speaking*: Similar details at Dio 37.43: Cato’s leadership on this occasion is praised by Cicero at *Sest.* 62. Cato and Minucius were trying to enforce their veto (Suet. *Iul.* 16.1). Plutarch is typically (*Ti. Gracch.* 10 and n. 46, *Cato* 20) imprecise when a veto is in point.
134. *Murena ... denounced*: Ch. 21 and n. 87. He was now consul.
135. *He left ... for Asia ... Pompey*: Yet tribunes were not supposed to be absent from the city for a single night.
136. *stopping the senate ... remove him from office*: Suet. *Iul.* 16 has a tale that both Caesar and Metellus Nepos were removed from office by senatorial decree; a few days later Caesar restrained

some popular demonstrations on his behalf, and the senate restored him (but not necessarily Metellus) to office. It is not clear whether this refers to the same incident as the present passage, and if so which of the two versions has more truth in it. The proposal to remove Metellus may have been based on his unconstitutional behaviour in leaving the city (previous n.).

137. *Lucullus, now returned ... triumph*: Lucullus had returned in 66 BCE, and the struggle with Memmius took place before mid 63, when the triumph was celebrated (*MRR* ii.169): on the events see *Luc.* 37 and nn. there. Hence these events took place at least six months earlier than the confrontation with Metellus in early 62. If the dislocation is deliberate, it may be to give a smoother transition to Pompey's role in the next chapter.
138. *his sister Servilia*: In fact, his niece (ch. 24 and n. 106).
139. *proposal ... a tyranny*: This echoes the charge of Metellus earlier in the chapter: Cato's opponents are picking it up as a refrain. The true proponents of 'tyranny', Plutarch implies, are on the other side. But the loose chronology here has imported an error, for Cato did not yet hold his 'office' of tribune at the time of Memmius's attacks (n. 137). See J. Bellemore, *Historia* 45 (1996), 504–8, assuming (perhaps too generously) that Plutarch is right that Cato was in office at the time, and interpreting this as the quaestorship, which she dates to 64 (cf. n. 68).
140. *Pompey's own return*: He had probably arrived in Brundisium by December 62 BCE (*MRR* ii.176).
141. *made him a great man*: There is a play here on the name 'Pompey the Great'.
142. *Piso*: M. Pupius Piso Frugi Calpurnianus, who had been a legate of Pompey in the East. These are the elections of midsummer 62 BCE for the consulship of 61; Piso was elected along with M. Valerius Messalla Niger. As *Pomp.* 44 makes clear, the request was because Pompey would be forbidden from entering the city until after his triumph (n. 156), so a very considerable delay would be necessary. The triumph eventually took place in September 61, though doubtless both the return (n. 140) and the triumph could have been quicker if necessary.
143. *two marriageable nieces of Cato*: The offer seems to have been in early 61 BCE, after Pompey had divorced Mucia (n. 62). We should remember that Pompey and Cato were already related in some way (ch. 14 and n. 62). The two nieces were daughters of his sister Servilia (ch. 1 and n. 5), who in fact had three daughters by her second marriage to D. Iunius Silanus (n. 85); one later married the tyrannicide C. Cassius (*Brut.* 7 and n. 52). Even the eldest sister could be no older than sixteen, for Servilia's first

marriage lasted till the death of her husband M. Iunius Brutus in 78, and so it was presumably the elder two who now counted as 'marriageable'.

144. *but for his daughters*: This version, oddly, seems to be the one assumed in Clodius's attacks in ch. 45 (n. 238): the variant accounts are discussed by Geiger, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 57–61. Porcia (n. 109) might be marriageable at this date (62 or 61), though she may already have married Bibulus (ch. 25); but Cato's other child by Atilia was a son (n. 109). He was probably already married to Marcia by now (n. 108) and possibly a daughter had already been born, but she would still be an infant rather than 'marriageable' and the projected marriage to Pompey's son (presumably Cn. Pompeius, n. 62) would have to be a promise for the future.
145. *his wife and his sisters*: The scene of wife and sisters recalls ch. 27: there they sat in the household in fear, now in joy; but, at least in Cato's own eyes, the danger this time is just as palpable. The women will reappear in ch. 32 (n. 169).
146. *no way of capturing Cato by way of his women's quarters*: Cato's language is sarcastically military: this, he implies, is the crude way the soldier thinks.
147. *one of his friends*: L. Afranius, as *Pomp.* 44 specifies. He was duly elected consul for 60 BCE. Even by Roman standards the bribery was particularly blatant: *Cic. Att.* 1.16.12.
148. *Cato would appear ... wrong*: See Intro. *Cato*. This adapts a judgement that goes back to Asinius Pollio (General Intro. III) and that Plutarch expresses elsewhere: it was the friendship rather than the enmity of Caesar and Pompey that destroyed the Republic (*Caes.* 13), and that indeed was Cato's own view (*Pomp.* 47). But here Cato's own responsibility is highlighted (cf. n. 160). Both the judgement and its explicitness are interesting. It ensures that we see the whole catastrophic history of the next fifteen years as partly Cato's own fault. In the other Lives it is Cato's foresight rather than his blameworthiness that is stressed (n. 164).
149. *make a marriage ... two men*: See n. 160.
150. *both men argued for ... dispositions*: See *Luc.* 42.
151. *summoned the soldiers ... distribution of land*: Pompey had dismissed his army on returning to Italy (n. 123); the senate had failed to respond to this gesture by voting the men the land-allotments they might have expected. Summoning them to Rome might intimidate the senate, or if necessary the assembly, into voting them the land.
152. *drove Pompey ... Clodius*: Clodius is already familiar from ch. 19.

Pomp. 46 expands on the indignity of Pompey's association with Clodius. Any understanding between the two (and it is disputed how close they were) may date from 59 BCE rather than 60.

153. *an alliance with Caesar*: The triple alliance of Pompey, Crassus and Caesar in 60 BCE (*Caes.* 13, *Pomp.* 47, *Luc.* 42 with n. 240). Here Plutarch contrives to describe it without mentioning Crassus, an indication of how little interest this Life generates in the historical background. Pompey and Caesar are the real foils for Cato's high principles, and the focus rests on them.
154. *just returned from governing Spain*: In 60 BCE (*Caes.* 13).
155. *present in person*: The point at issue was the announcement of the candidature (*professio*), which had to be made in person.
156. *to wait outside the walls*: I.e. outside the *pomerium*, the ancient boundary of the city. Pompey had suffered from the same restriction in 61 BCE (n. 142).
157. *to stand for office in absence*: As App. *Civil Wars* 2.8 notes, there were precedents for this.
158. *talked out the day ... forced the senate to adjourn*: This was Cato's favourite tactic, as Plutarch notes at *Advice on Public Life* 804c; cf. chs. 5 with n. 24, 33, 43, and e.g. *Caes. BC* 1.32.
159. *Once elected consul*: For 59 BCE.
160. *he betrothed Julia to him*: Julia, Caesar's only daughter, would by now have been twelve or thirteen years old. Here, but not in the parallel accounts in *Caes.* 14 and *Pomp.* 47, Plutarch advances the marriage to the beginning of his account of Caesar's consulship, presumably to accentuate the damage done by Cato's refusal of the marriage-alliance in ch. 30. In fact the marriage took place in late April or early May 59, and it does not seem to have been preceded by a long engagement (*Cic. Att.* 2.17.1 refers to 'that sudden marriage connection').
161. *laws ... land to the poor*: There were two bills, one introduced in January 59 BCE, the second (ch. 33) in late April; 'to the poor' operates with Plutarch's usual assumption of a clash between the 'few'/'rich' and the 'many'/'poor' (General Intro. IV). In fact the principal, though not the only, beneficiaries were to be Pompey's veterans (n. 151).
162. *Pompey ... support*: More detail at *Pomp.* 47 and *Caes.* 14, including a promise which Plutarch found particularly scandalous – to use both shield and sword against anyone who opposed.
163. *Bibulus*: See n. 116.
164. *already suspected ... for no good purpose*: Cato's sagacity is also stressed in other Lives (*Caes.* 13, *Pomp.* 47). In this Life, but not the others, it is developed to make Cato's foresight deepen gradually (chs. 33, 42, 43).

165. *Bibulus ... lictors ... broke their rods of office*: It is uncertain whether this happened in the fight over the first or over the second agrarian bill (n. 161); Plutarch's language here suggests the first, but his sequence of the events of 59 BCE is unreliable. Bibulus's response to this and similar violence was to barricade himself in his house for the last eight months of his consulate (*Pomp.* 48).
166. *many were wounded*: Including two tribunes, according to *Pomp.* 48.
167. *Not merely ... swear to observe it*: Despite Plutarch's uncertain chronology, he is probably right in making this an oath to support the first agrarian bill: *Cic. Att.* 2.18.2 says that 'even the Campanian bill' (i.e. the second one) or 'the Campanian bill too' carried such an oath. Perhaps others too had similar clauses, for *Cic. Sest.* 61 has Cato swearing to several laws.
168. *remembering ... similar law*: In 100 BCE, when Q. Caecilius Metellus Numidicus had refused to take an oath to observe the agrarian legislation of Saturninus and had gone into exile (*Mar.* 29, *MRR* i.574, G-C, pp. 105-7).
169. *the women of Cato's family ... tearful entreaties*: By now they are forming a sort of weak-willed refrain (cf. chs. 27, 30 with n. 145).
170. *wholly senseless ... happened*: Cicero argues along similar lines at *Sest.* 61.
171. *Clodius ... against him*: The Greek need only mean that Clodius *would be* using his (anticipated) tribunate to attack Cicero, but the sequence is still misleading. An essential preliminary to Clodius's candidature for the tribunate was his transfer to the plebs, which only comes in the next ch. For his election as tribune see n. 176.
172. *Favonius*: The first appearance of the fanatical Catonian M. Favonius, of whose extremes Plutarch did not approve (ch. 41). He was quaestor before 59 BCE, aedile in 53 or 52 (ch. 46 and n. 242) and went on to be praetor in 49. He was executed after Philippi in 42. At *Brut.* 12 and 34 he is Cato's 'lover', but this probably means no more than 'besotted with', even though philosophical admiration could readily take a physical turn.
173. *a second bill ... almost the whole of Campania*: This was in April 59 BCE (cf. nn. 161, 167).
174. *Caesar ... off to prison*: Plutarch is probably wrong in attaching this dramatic scene to the second agrarian bill; other sources have Caesar dragging Cato away from a speech in the senate, not before the people. It probably happened early in the year, for in the later parts of 59 BCE Cato was one of those who boycotted the senate (*Cic. Sest.* 63).
175. *Illyria ... four legions*: In fact the people, probably in March or

April 59 BCE, gave Caesar only Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, with three legions; the senate later added Transalpine Gaul and the fourth legion.

176. *illegally transferred Publius Clodius ... tribune*: This transfer had taken place by early April 59 BCE. Such transfers were not in themselves 'illegal' (Cato himself is right about this in ch. 40, n. 208), but various irregularities are alleged by Cicero (*De Domo* 34–42). Certainly the procedure was complex, involving (at least in this case) adoption into a plebeian family: on the technicalities, see W. J. Tatum, *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher* (1999), pp. 87–113. The tribunicial elections were possibly in July, more likely later. More details on Clodius's campaign against Cicero are given at *Cic.* 30–32. Cicero went into exile in March 58.
177. *made consuls*: For 58 BCE. As with Clodius's election, 'made' blurs the distinction between the formal declaration of the result, made by the consuls as returning officers, and their immense influence in securing the election that they wanted.
178. *Piso, Caesar's father-in-law*: Piso is L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the target of Cicero's *In Pisonem*. Caesar had married Piso's daughter Calpurnia earlier in 59 BCE: in *Pomp.* 47 and *Caes.* 14. Plutarch treats this along with the marriage of Julia and Pompey as part of the shameful women-trading, but this Life has made the point the neater and simpler one of Pompey marrying Julia instead of Cato's niece.
179. *Aulus Gabinius*: As tribune in 67 BCE he had carried the bill conferring on Pompey command against the pirates (*Pomp.* 25), and then had served as a Pompeian legate. Like Piso he is pilloried in Cicero's *In Pisonem*, and his 'lifestyle' figures there prominently, including his taste for dancing; unsurprisingly, he was no friend of Cicero (*Cic.* 31). He does seem to have been a loyal Pompeian until Pompey failed to support him during the fifties; then he fought for Caesar in the Civil War. See R. G. M. Nisbet's edition of *In Pisonem* (1961), pp. 188–92.
180. *he would not ... if Cato were there*: Misleading: Cicero left for exile before Cato left for Cyprus.
181. *on entering office*: 10 December 59 BCE.
182. *the commission ... Ptolemy*: This is Ptolemy king of Cyprus, the younger brother of Ptolemy Auletes of Egypt (n. 188). He had ruled Cyprus since 80 BCE. Rome's decision in early 58 to annex Cyprus had been expected for some time, and it is credible that Clodius could discuss it 'on entering office'. The justification lay in the claim that the brothers' uncle Ptolemy XI Alexander II had bequeathed Egypt, including Cyprus, to Rome in 80; the present

Ptolemy had been less successful than his brother Auletes in manoeuvring at Rome to protect his position. On Cato's mission and its background see S. I. Oost, *Classical Philology* 50 (1955), 98–112, E. Badian, *JRS* 55 (1965), 110–21, and M. Siani-Davies, *Historia* 46 (1997), 306–40 at 312, 317–20.

183. *passed a bill ... send Cato on the mission*: This was in a second bill (March/April 58 BCE), subsequent to the original decision to annex Cyprus (February/March: on the dates see R. Kaster's commentary on Cicero's *Pro Sestio* (2006), pp. 393, 395). The senate seems to have approved (Vell. 2.54.5 with the n. in A. J. Woodman's commentary (1983)). Cato's official title seems to have been the cumbersome *pro quaestore pro praetore*. He left Rome in late spring 58.
184. *restoring some exiles to Byzantium*: The men had been condemned on a capital charge (Cic. *Sest.* 56, 84); it all probably goes back to the Mithridatic War. Cic. *De Domo* 52 suggests that this provision figured in the initial decree to annex Cyprus (previous n.). If this is right and if Plutarch is correct that 'the aim was to keep Cato out of the way as long as possible' (Badian, *JRS* 55 (1965), 116–17), doubts both aspects, perhaps wrongly, it must already have been assumed that the mission would be his.
185. *Cicero ... saviour of his country*: Plutarch's Cato knows the right language to tickle Cicero's vanity. The phrasing here recalls that at the end of ch. 28: there the need to avoid civil war called for resolute opposition, now timely acquiescence is required. For Cicero's exile see n. 176.
186. *his friend Canidius ... honourable retirement*: The financial responsibility Canidius carried suggests that he may have been Cato's quaestor (*MRR* iii.49). His identity is uncertain: possibly L. Caninius Gallus, tribune in 56 BCE (*MRR* ii.209), though his role at *Pomp.* 49 is surprisingly Pompeian for a 'friend' of Cato; possibly P. Canidius Crassus, suffect consul in 40, and prominent in *Antony* (chs. 34, 42, 56, 63–8, 71 with n. 194). The problem is discussed by J. Geiger, *CQ* 22 (1972), 130–34, and by M.-C. Ferrière, *Athenaeum* 88 (2000), 413–30.
187. *Paphos*: Where there was a famous Temple of Aphrodite.
188. *the other Ptolemy, the king of Egypt ... with his citizens*: Ptolemy XII Auletes, king of Egypt since 80 BCE and a friend of Rome, was expelled in 58 by the Alexandrians and replaced by his daughter Berenice. The commission of restoring him was likely to be a lucrative one, and jockeying for it became, as Cato foretells at the end of this chapter, a sordid theme of Roman politics for the next few years. Gabinius (n. 179) eventually restored him on his own authority in 55.

189. *taking a course of laxatives*: Or possibly, even more graphically, 'sitting on the lavatory'.
190. *send his nephew Brutus to Cyprus*: Brutus was Servilia's son (n. 5). More details on this mission at *Brut.* 3.
191. *his pamphlet against Cato*: The *Anticato(s)* (Intro.)
192. *For Munatius published ... main authority*: See Intro. Val. Max. 4.3.2 shows that Munatius also described Cato's restraint in dealing with the royal wealth, and Munatius is probably Plutarch's main source, directly or indirectly via Thræsea, for all the Cypriot material: see Geiger, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 50–52, arguing that the material came to Plutarch through Thræsea. If my interpretation of an Oxyrhynchus papyrus is correct (Intro. n. 10), we now have a fragment of Munatius dealing with the context of ch. 35.
193. *in Theophrastus's words*: Fr. 82 W., perhaps from *On Friendship*.
194. *I think he is honest*: So the initial distrust of ch. 36 seems to have been dispelled.
195. *Marcia – for she was still Cato's wife*: See nn. 108, 110, 117, 118. This is evidently after Cato's return to Rome in 56 BCE.
196. *Barca*: Presumably a servant or friend of Cato, but Plutarch leaves it unexplained. The name suggests an African.
197. *a little less than 7,000 talents*: 7,000 talents would be 42 million drachmas/denarii = 168 million sesterces; the sum was 'a little less', so probably 40 million denarii.
198. *2 talents and 500 drachmas*: i.e. 12,500 drachmas/denarii = 50,000 sesterces. Over 3,000 containers would have been needed.
199. *Cenchreae*: The port of Corinth on the Saronic Gulf.
200. *disprove any allegations ... might make*: Not that this prevented the attacks (ch. 45).
201. *hoped to use the accounts ... for others*: Cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 8 for a similar concern. Yet two further copies of the accounts should presumably have been lodged in separate cities of the province itself (*Cic. Att.* 6.7.2 etc., Oost, *Classical Philology* 50 (1955), 105), and Cato could easily have had further copies made. His annoyed response therefore looks to be an exaggeration by Munatius or Thræsea or Plutarch.
202. *When the ships came to port*: Probably May or June 56 BCE.
203. *Philippus ... consul at the time*: 56 BCE (n. 110).
204. *Philippus's colleague*: Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (*MRR* ii.207–8).
205. *Cicero was now back from the exile*: He had reached Rome on 4 September 57 BCE.
206. *Cicero used force ... Clodius's absence*: In the second half of 56 BCE. Plutarch tells the story very similarly in the earlier *Cic.* 34.

According to Dio 39.21 it took two attempts, with Clodius thwarting the first.

- 207. *Clodius's tribunate had been illegal*: See next n.
- 208. *there was nothing illegal ... plebeian*: Cato was right about this (n. 176), though Plutarch's own language in ch. 33 suggests that he sided with Cicero.
- 209. *Cicero was furious ... reconciled*: Cic. 34 puts this aspect differently: 'This clash between Cato and Cicero did not lead to any open quarrel, but their relations became cooler.'
- 210. *Then ...*: The chronology is again askew. The conference of Luca was in April 56 BCE; Cato did not return from Cyprus until after that (n. 202) and the events of ch. 40 were later still (n. 206).
- 211. *met with Pompey and Crassus*: At Luca: accounts also at *Caes.* 21, *Pomp.* 51, *Crassus* 14–15, but Plutarch's language is more indignant here than in his other versions.
- 212. *for a second consulship*: That of 55 BCE. Pompey and Crassus had shared a first consulship in 70.
- 213. *a second period of the same length*: I.e. five years (ch. 33).
- 214. *Lucius Domitius ... Cato's sister Porcia*: See ch. 1 and n. 4. Domitius was an inveterate opponent of Caesar, and his platform now included the proposal to remove Caesar from his command. He did become consul in 54 BCE.
- 215. *the Campus*: The Campus Martius, where the elections would be held, and so this was the morning of the elections themselves: *Pomp.* 52 less accurately says 'to the forum'. The campaign was so violent that the vote could not be held until January 55 BCE.
- 216. *elected consuls*: January 55 BCE (previous n.).
- 217. *the usual interval ... bribery*: Sixty days. The praetorship elections followed soon after those for the consulship, perhaps in February.
- 218. *the first of the tribes to be summoned*: Plutarch is hazy on the procedure. Praetors were elected not by the tribes but by the *comitia centuriata*. In that assembly the wealthiest century declared first, and conservative candidates might have an advantage.
- 219. *Vatinius*: P. Vatinius was a loyal supporter of the triumvirs, especially Caesar, whose Gallic command he had proposed when tribune in 59 BCE and on whose side he went on to fight in the Civil War, becoming consul in 47. His election to this praetorship gave rise to a charge of bribery in 54: Cicero was reluctantly forced to defend him.
- 220. *a tribune ... an immediate assembly*: Presumably Aquillius or Ateius Capito (n. 227), summoning an informal assembly (*contio*).
- 221. *Gaius Trebonius ... to the consuls*: Some time after 27 April 55 BCE (Cic. *Att.* 4.9.1). C. Trebonius was another who favoured Caesar's

side, fighting as a lieutenant in Gaul and in the Civil War and becoming consul in 45, but he was one of those who conspired against him in 44 (*Brut.* 17, *Ant.* 13).

- 222. *one would have Spain and Africa*: I.e. Pompey: more details at *Pomp.* 52 (four legions, of which he would lend 'two' – in fact one, ch. 45 and n. 240 – to Caesar). Spain (both Nearer and Farther) was Pompey's more important province, but *Pomp.* too mentions Africa: it is uncertain whether Plutarch is right about this. Pompey went on to govern Spain through legates, remaining himself close to Rome (ch. 45 and n. 241, *Pomp.* 53).
- 223. *the other Syria and Egypt*: Just 'Syria' at *Pomp.* 52 and *Crass.* 15; 'Syria and neighbouring lands' at Dio 39.33.2. Syria is the more important as it was to be the base for Crassus's ill-starred Parthian expedition, but Egypt is relevant in this Life as a further act in the story of Ptolemy. This is the culmination of the sordid politics that Cato foretold (ch. 37). Yet 'Egypt' was still an independent state; a governor of Syria might be expected to keep an eye on it, but the phrasing is still misleading.
- 224. *to fight and conquer anyone they chose*: Pompey had had a similar right under the Lex Manilia of 66 BCE, but this was highly irregular: the senate (or, rarely, the people) had customarily made these big foreign policy decisions (see Lintott, *Constitution*, p. 201).
- 225. *Others regarded opposition as hopeless ... Cato wanted to speak*: Cato was not quite as alone as Plutarch suggests: Favonius (n. 172) also opposed and was allowed an hour to speak (Dio 39.34).
- 226. *Cato prevented a conclusion to the debate*: See n. 158, though in this case it may not have been so much the all-day vocal filibuster as the way that these more physical distractions stopped Trebonius from having time to put the vote.
- 227. *Aquillius, one of the tribunes*: P. Aquillius Gallus, who opposed the consuls in concert with C. Ateius Capito (*MRR* ii.216).
- 228. *a second bill ... for Caesar*: The Lex Licinia Pompeia, summer or autumn 55 BCE.
- 229. *praetor for the following year*: 54 BCE. As the consuls for that year were to be L. Domitius (n. 214) and Appius Claudius Pulcher, the results of the elections show the limits of the control Pompey and Crassus were in fact able to exercise.
- 230. *without shoes or tunic*: A hint of Socrates, e.g. Xen. *Memorabilia* 1.6.2: this is one of the features which linked him with the figure of Eros in Diotima's tale of Penia and Poros in Plato's *Symposium* (203d ~ 220b). Cf. ch. 46 with n. 243, and see Intro.
- 231. *Some also say ... not true*: We have been given enough hints (chs. 11 and n.56, 38 and n. 191) of Caesar's *Anticato(s)* (ch.52) to

sense that the charge comes from him: the non-naming is similar to that of ch. 11.

232. *persuaded the senate ... submit their accounts*: This is probably the same proposal as Cicero refers to at *Att.* 4.17.3: if so, it related only to the consular candidates. Plutarch leaves the impression that the measure was passed: in fact, when the measure was brought before the people (September 54 BCE), a tribune interceded and prevented this from becoming law.
233. *shouting and ... throwing stones*: A spot, then, of the same medicine as Pompey suffered in the last chapter, but now it is not just a statue that is in danger, and there is no Cato-figure to come to Cato's own defence.
234. *Each of the candidates for office*: We have now moved to the candidates for the tribunicial elections, and this episode took place a few months earlier (late July 54 BCE: *Cic. Att.* 4.15.7 = *Ad Quintum fratrem* 2.15.4). Cicero's language is very similar to Plutarch's, and it is possible but not certain that he (probably the Atticus letter if so) was his source (Intro.).
235. *125,000 drachmas*: Or 500,000 sesterces, the way Cicero puts it in those letters.
236. *acquired for himself ... magistracies*: 'If these elections pass without bribery, as people expect, Cato will have achieved more than all laws and all jurors', *Cic. Att.* 4.15.8 = *Ad Quintum fratrem* 2.15.4 – possibly the origin of Plutarch's phrase, but Cicero meant it well.
237. *slunk back to Pompey*: In this Life Clodius is a more subservient figure than he is in other Lives, esp. *Pompey*, where he is much more difficult for the big men to control (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 98–9).
238. *embezzlement ... from Cyprus ... marriage-alliance with his daughter*: Chs. 38 and 30 respectively, though in ch. 30 itself and in *Pomp.* 44 Plutarch seems to prefer the version that it was a 'niece' rather than a 'daughter'. Dio 39.23.3 seems to place these attacks a year or so earlier, but doubtless there were repeated attacks and repeated replies.
239. *more wealth ... the whole world*: An exaggeration: Cato's nearly 7,000 talents (ch. 38) contrasts with 20,000 talents which Pompey claimed to have delivered to the treasury, and there was also a large sum passed over to Pompey's soldiers in pay and an additional 85 million denarii (over 14,000 talents) in annual revenue (*Pomp.* 45).
240. *he has given a legion ... to Caesar in Gaul*: In 54/3. *Pomp.* 52 (n. 222) and *Caes.* 25 speak of a loan of two legions, not one. In fact the present passage is right. The mistake in *Pompey* and *Caesar* comes from a misunderstanding of the sequence of 50 BCE, when

the senate decreed that both Caesar and Pompey should lose a legion, and Pompey specified the one he had already lent Caesar (*Caes.* 29).

241. *lurks by the city*: This was the way he governed Spain (n. 222).
242. *Marcus Favonius*: See n. 172. His aedileship may have been either in 53 or 52 BCE (*MRR* iii.49); Plutarch's sequence would seem to fit 53 better, but he may be using this episode to mask an interval and give some lighter relief between the crises of 55 and 52, and so his ordering may not be chronological.
243. *Apollodorus of Phalerum ... Socrates long ago*: Apollodorus was a constant companion of Socrates, known as 'the madman' for his crazy adoration. Plato makes him the narrator of *Symposium* (cf. n. 230). The Platonic allusion prepares for the Socratic texture of Cato's final days (Intro.).
244. *Curio*: If the reading is right, this is not the C. Scribonius Curio who figures prominently in the politics of early 49 BCE (*Caes.* 29–31, *Ant.* 2, 5, with nn. 7, 21: cf. n. 63): he was away in the East (*MRR* iii.91).
245. *candidates for the consulship*: Of 52 BCE. This is the Scipio of ch 7 (n. 34): he was about to become Pompey's father-in-law. P. Plautius Hypsaesus had fought under Pompey in the East in the sixties; he never became consul. T. Annius Milo had adeptly developed the art of street-fighting against Clodius's gangs: in January 52 a skirmish led to Clodius's death, and in April Milo was condemned (*Pro Milone* is the speech Cicero framed for the context of the trial) and left for exile. As in 55 (n. 215), the campaign was so disrupted that the elections had still not taken place when the consular year started. This gives particular point to the talk of 'anarchy' in this chapter, for there were literally no consuls in power. More details on the disruption and Pompey's handling of it are given at *Pomp.* 54–5.
246. *to use ... end in anarchy*: The language echoes the ends of both ch. 30 – Cato has by now learnt his lesson, and realizes that courting Pompey may be the lesser evil – and ch. 45 – better now to give Pompey 'monarchy' (in the blander sense of the 'sole rule' of being, irregularly, a single consul) before rather than after the anarchy that threatened.
247. *Bibulus, Cato's relative*: His son-in-law (n. 116).
248. *Pompey was made consul*: For 52 BCE: he entered office in the intercalary month, four days before the beginning of March. He was authorized to take a colleague of his choice, but not before two months had elapsed (*Pomp.* 54), and eventually chose his new father-in-law, Metellus Scipio (nn. 34, 245, 250) to join him in office for the last five months of the year (*MRR* ii.234).

249. *a measure of Pompey ... bribes to people in the past*: The Lex Pompeia de Ambitu, which applied retrospectively to the whole period since 70 BCE. Either this method or his separate law *de ui* also increased the penalties for convictions for violence.
250. *including some friends ... of Pompey himself*: *Pomp.* 55 mentions in particular a spectacular intervention in the trial of Metellus Scipio, but also gives Pompey some credit for strong administration in other respects.
251. *a law forbidding ... good character*: Dio 40.52 says that this was the measure that ‘inflicted most harm’ – but seems to mean that it harmed those who deserved it, for hitherto such testimony had ‘snatched away’ many from punishment. This was probably a clause of the Lex Pompeia de Ambitu (n. 249), not a separate enactment.
252. *Munatius Plancus*: *Pomp.* 55 says less accurately that Pompey appeared in person at the trial and spoke. This is T. Munatius Plancus Bursa, brother or cousin of the more famous L. Munatius Plancus of *Ant.* 18. Tribune in 52 BCE, this Plancus was active against Milo after Clodius’s death (n. 245). This trial took place after his term of office had finished, when Cicero successfully prosecuted him (*MRR* ii.235); Pompey may or may not still have been consul (tribunes laid down their office on 9 December, consuls not till the end of the month), but in any case Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.2.2 confirms Pompey’s strenuous efforts on Plancus’s behalf.
253. *tried to prevent ... being read*: Plutarch’s Greek leaves it unclear whether the attempt succeeded: Val. Max. 6.2.5 suggests that it did.
254. *Cato’s prophecies ... stirred Pompey into action*: In *Pompey* itself, esp. ch. 54, Pompey is alert to the danger much earlier, and his parade of insouciance is a matter of conscious policy (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 96–7).
255. *Cato ... candidature for the consulship*: For 51 BCE; the elections took place in August 52. This therefore predated the trial of Munatius (ch. 48).
256. *Sulpicius*: Ser. Sulpicius Rufus, a renowned lawyer, defeated eleven years earlier in the consular elections for 62 BCE. He and Cato had then co-operated in prosecuting Murena (n. 87), and that may be one of the past services here mentioned, for Sulpicius would have been the principal gainer had that prosecution succeeded. This time Sulpicius did succeed, and became consul for 51, along with the strong anti-Caesarian M. Claudius Marcellus (*MRR* ii.240).
257. *persuade the senate ... votes on their behalf*: The terms recall the

provisions of the Lex Aurelia of 70 BCE, though the way it is described here suggests a broader measure than the mere exclusion of *nomenclatores* (ch. 8 and n. 42). Possibly that Lex was reinstated; possibly this was yet another provision of the Lex Pompeia de Ambitu, in which case Plutarch's language is misleading (Cato 'persuaded the senate'); but most likely Plutarch is right, and it was simply a senatorial decree. It need not have applied to anything beyond the current election in these difficult circumstances.

258. *played ball in the Campus*: A famous act of insouciance (Seneca *Epistulae* 104.33). The 'Campus (Martius)' has a particular point, for it was here (n. 215) that the election itself had taken place the day before.
259. *Cicero takes him to task*: The present tense suggests a published work, but if so it was not in one that survives. Jones (*Rheinisches Museum* 113 (1970), 191–2) thinks it may have been Cicero's *Cato* (cf. Intro. and nn. 1, 4 there). If so, Cato's own remark ('Cato explained ...') will not have been a riposte to Cicero, but an explanation offered independently.
260. *to stand for the praetorship a second time*: The first was mentioned at chs. 42, where Plutarch had stressed the malpractice to which Cato goes on to refer here, and at ch. 44.
261. *Caesar ... killed 300,000 of them*: The narrative jumps back to events of 55 BCE, as Plutarch shifts focus from Pompey to Caesar. This was Caesar's campaign against the Usipetes and Tencteri. At *Caes.* 22, the fullest account, Plutarch says 400,000 were killed, and so does Appian (*Celtica* 1.4 and 18); the 300,000 figure recurs in *Comp. Nicias–Crassus* 4, probably by a slip of memory in that passage and here. Caesar's own account has 430,000 enemy, and leaves the impression that few escaped (*BG* 4.15.3).
262. *hand over Caesar ... fall on the city*: This was the traditional vindication of Roman good faith when a breach of international justice was admitted: there had been famous instances in 321 and 136–35 (*Ti. Gracch.* 7 and n. 30 there).
263. *it would be right ... to succeed Caesar*: We now return to the preliminaries of the war in 51–50 BCE: the phrasing masks the shift, for the proposal to replace Caesar had been in the air since 55 (n. 214). It became a flashpoint in 51–50. *Caes.* 28–30 and *Pomp.* 56–9 have a few more details on those complex events.
264. *Pompey too ... neither of them should do so*: The tribune Curio (n. 63), by now energetically pro-Caesarian, was proposing this at least as early as May 50 BCE, and repeated it 'often' during the year (Hirtius, *De Bello Gallico* 8.52): Cato's angry riposte could have come on any of these occasions (perhaps the important

debate of 1 December: next n.), or – perhaps more likely, given Cato's character – on several.

265. *believed what he said ... people*: Probably the senate was less anti-Caesarian than Plutarch's language suggests. On 1 December 370 BCE senators voted for the proposal of joint disarmament, 22 against (*Ant.* 5 and nn. 28–30, *Pomp.* 58, App. *Civil Wars* 2.30), and it is hard to think that this was simply through 'fear of the people'.
266. *Ariminum fell ... on the march to Rome*: Ariminum (modern Rimini) fell on, probably, the night of 10–11 January 49 BCE. Plutarch gives more details of these events at *Pomp.* 60 and *Caes.* 32–3, with a memorable description of the panic at Rome at *Caes.* 33.
267. *everyone looked to Cato*: As they had once been 'looking to Pompey' (ch. 13); the echo gives added point to 'and also of Pompey himself' here (and on the focus on Pompey in what follows), for Pompey recognizes that it is Cato, not he, who has emerged as the man of insight and leadership.
268. *entrust the state to Pompey alone*: This proposal to appoint Pompey commander-in-chief was initially rejected, though he was empowered along with other magistrates to fight Caesar (*MRR* ii.263). His pre-eminence was clear in practice, but he was not formally appointed commander-in-chief until the end of the year.
269. *Pompey ... left Rome*: 17 January 49 BCE. Elsewhere Plutarch criticizes that decision (*Comp. Ages.–Pomp.* 3), though *Pomp.* 63 can be read as a defence of the later decision to abandon Italy (cf. *Cato* 53): but strategic issues are not here his concern, and the emphasis falls instead on the unpreparedness that would have been avoided had Cato's earlier advice been accepted.
270. *his younger son*: By Marcia; presumably the boy who went on to be a candidate for the augurship in 43 BCE (n. 115), but very little is known of him. He would now be about ten or eleven.
271. *his older son*: By Atilia (nn. 108, 109); his name was the same as his father's, M. Porcius Cato. He would now be in his early to mid twenties.
272. *Marcia ... on his death*: See ch. 25 and notes there. Val. Max. 5.9.2 says that Hortensius left his son as his heir: probably the estate was shared between wife and son.
273. *particular target for Caesar's abuse*: In the *Anticato(s)* (Intro.).
274. *First to the unspeakable ... Heracles*: Euripides *Heracles* 174–5, where Amphitryon is rebutting Lycus's charge that Heracles 'was a mere nothing when it came to bravery'. There may be a hint that Caesar here showed himself just as despicable a tyrant as Lycus.

275. *Sicily ... as his province*: Probably as *propraetor*, as Plutarch says in ch. 57 (*MRR* ii.263). He had been appointed by 26 January 49 BCE, but did not leave at once (*Cic. Att.* 7.15.2).
276. *Asinius Pollio ... with an army*: Pollio had been with Caesar at the Rubicon (*Caes.* 32), but was now serving under C. Scribonius Curio (nn. 63, 264): *MRR* ii.266.
277. *He sent to him ... changed*: There is a different version of the exchange at *App. Civil Wars* 2.40: Cato asked whether he had brought constitutionally issued orders to take over the island, and Pollio replied that ‘the master of Italy has given me this assignment’.
278. *Pompey ... Dyrrhachium*: Pompey abandoned Italy (cf. n. 269) and set sail on 17 March 49 BCE; the consuls had crossed two weeks earlier.
279. *he sailed away*: On 23 April 49 BCE (*Cic. Att.* 10.16.3), after initially making energetic preparations to fight (*Caes. BC* 1.30). The ‘larger force’ that was expected was that of Curio, which duly took over the island.
280. *his sister Servilia*: Or ‘niece’ (n. 106).
281. *her marriage to Lucullus*: On Servilia and the gossip she attracted see ch. 24 and n. 106, *Luc.* 38 and n. 211. Lucullus had died in late 57 or early 56. The son, Marcus, would now be in his early teens.
282. *Caesar ... slanderous attacks*: The *Anticato(s)* again.
283. *Liburnians*: Light, fast galleys.
284. *Pompey too ... obey the constitution*: The phrasing recalls the massive senatorial support for such a proposal just before the war (ch. 51 and n. 264). Pompey had good reason to be nervous.
285. *Bibulus*: Cato’s son-in-law, ch. 25 and n. 116. As proconsul (*MRR* ii.250, 261) he anyway outranked Cato: to judge from Cato’s constitutionalist stance in chs. 55 with Cicero and 57 with Scipio, it is hard to think that Cato could have accepted the command.
286. *won, and routed the enemy*: Mid July 48 BCE.
287. *I have described this in the Pompey*: *Pomp.* 65–6, and also *Caes.* 39. The *Caesar* account of Dyrrhachium is in fact the more detailed, but the form of the cross-reference continues the concentration on relations with Pompey. *Caes.* 41 also notes that Cato, concerned to avoid further bloodshed, was the only one to praise Pompey for not following up his victory: that point would complicate the picture here, and Plutarch suppresses it.
288. *This was inspired ... in the way he wanted*: This explanation is given more tentatively in *Pomp.* 67 (‘some say that it was for this reason ...’); here Plutarch does not weaken the point with any qualification.

289. *Many other distinguished men ... along with Cato*: Including Cicero and M. Varro (Cic. Div. 1.68, 2.114).
290. *defeat at Pharsalus*: 9 August 48 BCE. Here the outline of events is clearly taken for granted (more details at *Caes.* 42–6, *Pomp.* 68–73).
291. *Corcyra, where the fleet was based*: He was joined there by Scipio and by other distinguished fugitives from the battlefield of Pharsalus (App. Civil Wars 2.87, Dio 42.10).
292. *Cicero ... left for Italy*: He was back in Brundisium by mid October.
293. *the young Pompey*: Cn. Pompeius, Pompey's elder son (ch. 14 and n. 62). See ch. 59 and n. 313.
294. *took him aside ... calmed him down*: Cic. 39 tells it a little more vividly.
295. *Pompey the Great*: So-called here partly to distinguish him from the son who figured in the previous chapter; there is also a hint of the dimension of the fall from such greatness to such desperation.
296. *Sextus, the younger of Pompey's sons*: Ch. 14 and n. 62.
297. *the death of his father in Egypt*: Probably 28 September 48 BCE: the death is magnificently described in *Pomp.* 77–80.
298. *Labienus*: The famous lieutenant of Caesar during the Gallic War; he had however immediately joined Pompey when the Civil War broke out, and was now in command of a Pompeian force. The point is not that the Cyrenians were taking one side rather than the other, but that they were trusting one Pompeian commander but not the other.
299. *Pompey's father-in-law Scipio*: Ch. 7 and n. 34. He was now proconsul, perhaps technically of Syria (*MRR* ii.260, 275).
300. *King Juba*: Juba I of Numidia. Following a brush with Caesar during an embassy to Rome, he was supporting Pompey, but after Pharsalus (so it was alleged) he sensed the opportunity to annex Roman Africa. Doubtless king and generals were all trying to exploit one another. He eventually killed himself in 46 BCE (for his son, cf. *Ant.* 87 and n. 383).
301. *Attius Varus*: P. Attius Varus, who had governed Africa at some point before 49 and in that year returned to seize control of his old province (*Caes. BC* 1.31.2, *MRR* ii.228, 260, iii.29).
302. *Cato set out on foot ... cattle*: Winter 48–47: this desert march west from Berenice (modern Benghazi) became legendary, and is lavishly recounted by Lucan (9.371–949).
303. *Their technique ... snakes themselves*: So also Lucan 9.925–37.
304. *seven days*: Strabo 17.3.20 says thirty days, Lucan 9.940–41 seems to suggest two months.
305. *walking ... mule*: Just as he always had (chs. 5, 9, 13): what was

then idiosyncratic austerity now becomes inspiring leadership.

306. *a pamphlet of attacks on him*: See n. 35.

307. *his critics*: Presumably Caesar again in the *Anticato*(s).

308. *a time in Sicily ... Philostratus as they walked around*: For Philostratus see *Ant.* 80 and n. 367. Cato spent some time in Sicily in 49 BCE (ch. 53), but this episode may belong to an earlier, more leisurely visit – unless it is simply Caesar’s imaginative invective.

309. *with a Scipio in command in Africa*: Just as the great Scipio Africanus had defeated Hannibal at the battle of Zama in 201 BCE. *Caes.* 52 mentions an ancient oracle promising success as long as a Scipio was in command in Africa, and tells how Caesar appointed a nonentity, Scipio Salvito, to be a figurehead.

310. *a great battle at Thapsus*: 6 April 46 BCE: more details at *Caes.* 53.

311. *with a book ... he was reading*: Rather as he had in the Roman senate, in calmer times (ch. 19): but now the reading-matter has to be more pragmatic.

312. *Hadrumentum*: An important sea-port about 100 km south of Carthage.

313. *Spain had revolted under the banner of the young Pompey*: I.e. Cn. Pompeius (n. 62): more details at *Caes.* 56.

314. *Just as porous bodies ... these citizens*: Rather the opposite of Cato himself, then, whose stubbornness had given him so retentive a memory (ch. 1) and so constant a resolve.

315. *there were a fair number of these*: The manuscripts of *B Afr.* 95 give a figure of either 1,000 or 1,500.

316. *Marcus Rubrius*: Nothing more is securely known of this man: possibly the son of the Rubrius of ch. 9.

317. *secure his own safety along with theirs*: This travesties the advice that Cato himself had given to ‘secure their own safety along with that of others’ (ch. 62, cf. ch. 65 and n. 323). Cato’s appeal had been to blend altruism with self-interest: this version is brutally selfish.

318. *not to include any for himself*: Appian’s version of Cato’s reply – that he needed no one to plead for him with Caesar, and Caesar knew that very well (*BC* 2.98) – is more forceful than Plutarch’s, but does not fit the philosophical self-righteousness that Plutarch’s Cato shows here, nor the claim that Caesar found Cato’s intentions hard to read (ch. 72).

319. *already on his way with all his army*: April 46 BCE.

320. *Marcus Octavius*: He had been an aedile in 50 BCE, after which he held various Pompeian commands. He is mentioned as a naval commander in *B Afr.* 44 and presumably held the rank of at least *propraetor*, if there was an issue whether he or Cato should command (see *MRR* ii.302).

321. *were already plundering ... spoils of war*: ‘They launched themselves into the town and killed many of the Uticans, then broke into and pillaged their houses’, *B Afr.* 87.
322. *all the others ... downcast faces*: *B Afr.* 87 gives the more down-to-earth version that Cato bribed the horsemen to desist.
323. *co-operate together ... safety*: Again the distinctive Catonian note (cf. ch. 62 and n. 317).
324. *Statilius*: He is known only from this *Life* and from *Brutus* (chs. 12 and 51 with n. 74).
325. *Apollonides ... Demetrius the Peripatetic*: Not very much is known about either, though Demetrius may well be a ‘Demetrius of Byzantium’ mentioned by Diogenes Laertius (5.83) and the composer of a work ‘on Poems’ cited three times by Athenaeus. ‘Stoic’ and ‘Peripatetic’ here need not allude to the schools’ different doctrines on suicide or on expediency: Cato was a Stoic too. The point is rather that, now Cato has reached his own decision, it should fall to other philosophers to argue Statilius into a different decision himself.
326. *Lucius Caesar ... pleading for the three hundred*: This was the son of the consul of 64 BCE, and a distant relative of the dictator (whom his father supported). He was now serving as proquaestor (*MRR* ii.297). His family connections fitted him to be an intermediary, and he had already served in that role shortly after the outbreak of war (Caes. *BC* 1.8). He was later executed, it was said (Suet. *Iul.* 75) against Caesar’s wishes.
327. *called in his son ... as Lucius was leaving*: *B Afr.* 88 makes this clearer: Cato ‘commended’ his children to Lucius, i.e. entrusted him with their safety.
328. *he would only recline ... to sleep*: See ch. 56.
329. *the Peripatetic*: Demetrius (ch. 65).
330. *and lying down*: A gesture of significance given that emphasis that ‘he would only recline in order to sleep’ (n. 328). The final sleep approaches.
331. *On the Soul*: The *Phaedo*.
332. *Cleanthes ... and Boutas*: Nothing more is securely known of either. There is no reason to identify this Boutas with the elegiac poet cited at *Rom.* 21.
333. *Crassus*: P. Licinius Crassus Iunianus, who had been a pro-Pompeian tribune in 53 BCE and perhaps praetor in 51, then served as legate under Metellus Scipio and now under Cato (*MRR* ii.301, iii.119).
334. *And thus he died*: 12 April 46 BCE.
335. *people prefer ... interpretation*: A remark with some edge, it would seem: but its ambiguity – it could, just, mean that Caesar was so

generous a person that he *deserves* the benefit of the doubt – allows Plutarch to avoid any charge of anti-imperial subversiveness. At *Caes.* 54 Plutarch appears to be sceptical as to whether Caesar would have spared him. Cato and his family so dominate the end that Plutarch gives no details of Caesar's treatment of Utica itself: he pardoned the town, but executed those of the three hundred whom he could find (*App. Civil Wars* 2.100).

336. *His son was unharmed by Caesar*: As was Pompey's daughter, who was somehow related to Cato (n. 62), and her two children (*App. Civil Wars* 2.100). Caesar also allowed Cato's family to retain their patrimony (*Val. Max.* 5.1.10).
337. *this son was a lazy person ... treatment of women*: A link with Phocion, who also had a son of unsatisfactory morals (*Phoc.* 20, 38).
338. *There he fell ... courage*: More details at *Brut.* 49.
339. *Cato's daughter*: Porcia (chs. 24–5 and 30; nn. 109, 115, 144).
340. *I have told of this in the Brutus*: Chs. 13 and 53.
341. *at Philippi that he died*: More details at *Brut.* 51.

BRUTUS

Further Reading

Brutus is less well served by modern biographies than one might expect, but M. L. Clarke's *The Noblest Roman* (1981) is helpful. R. Syme's classic *The Roman Revolution* (1939) offers a brilliant narrative of the tangled events of 44–42 BCE; more modern accounts can be found in the relevant chapters of the revised *Cambridge Ancient History*, by E. Rawson on 44–43 in *CAH* ix.2.468–90 and by myself on 43–42 in *CAH* x.2.1–8. Rawson treats the fame of Cassius and Brutus in antiquity in the paper cited in n. 4 below, and D. Sedley discusses 'The Ethics of Brutus and Cassius' in *JRS* 87 (1997), 41–53. Several incisive articles by J. L. Moles cover aspects of this Life, especially 'Fate, Apollo, and M. Junius Brutus', *American Journal of Philology* 104 (1983), 249–56; 'Some "last words" of M. Iunius Brutus', *Latomus* 42 (1983), 763–79; and 'Plutarch, Brutus, and Brutus' Greek and Latin Letters' in J. Mossman (ed.), *Plutarch and his Intellectual World* (1997), pp. 141–68. I am also indebted to Moles' unpublished 1979 Oxford doctoral thesis on the Life, and simple references to 'Moles' in the notes are to that work. Various aspects are covered in my own articles collected in Pelling, *P&H*; I have also written on Greek philosophy in the Roman Lives in *Philosophia Togata* I, ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (2nd edn, 1997), treating *Brutus* at pp. 222–8, on the Life's use of dreams and apparitions in *The Lost Memoirs of Augustus*, ed. C. Smith and A. Powell (2009), pp. 41–64, and on Shakespeare's use of the Life in 'Seeing a Roman tragedy through Greek eyes: Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*' in *Sophocles and the Tragic Tradition*, ed. E. M. Hall and S. D. Goldhill (2009).

Notes to the Introduction to Brutus

1. On Brutus's Academic philosophy see Sedley, *JRS* 87 (1997), 41–53, emphasizing that the justification of the tyrannicide makes best sense when seen in a Platonic light.
2. This is discussed by Sedley, *ibid.*, 45–6.
3. A favourite quotation of Plutarch's: cf. *Cor.* 15 and *How to tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 69f, in each case underlining the importance of personal charm in a politician's repertoire.
4. E. Rawson, 'Cassius and Brutus: The Memory of the Liberators' in *Past Perspectives*, ed. I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart and A. J. Woodman (1986), pp. 101–19, repr. in E. Rawson's *Roman Culture and Society* (1991), pp. 488–507.

5. Cf. General Intro. I.
6. See Pelling, *P&H*, p. 37 and n. 86.
7. He is mentioned as an orator at Quintilian 10.6.4.
8. Moles in Mossman, *Plutarch and his Intellectual World*, pp. 141–68.
9. As I suggest in my commentary on *Antony* (1988), p. 26, and in Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 16–17 and n. 111.
10. I discuss Shakespeare's techniques in the paper cited above in Further Reading.
11. Thus the stage-direction in *Julius Caesar* has 'Caesar's ghost', and this seems confirmed by Brutus's own words at V.5.17; but at IV.3.282 it is Brutus' own 'evil spirit'.

Notes to Brutus

1. *that Junius Brutus ... Kings*: I.e. Lucius Iunius Brutus, traditionally one of the first two consuls of the Republic, whose story is partly told in *Poplicola*. This uncompromising opening sentence therefore waves away the doubts about the lineage that the second half of the chapter raises. The descent from the man who expelled the Tarquins is vital for understanding Brutus's mentality in ch. 9, and this statue is also important there. Plutarch may well have seen it himself: he several times uses statues as evidence for personal appearance (A. Wardman, *CQ* 17 (1967), 414–20), and he is the only author to give the detail of the drawn sword.
2. *a character ... cold-tempered steel*: Steel forged in cold water is in fact harder though also more brittle than if normally tempered (Moles). *Popl.* 3 calls the first Brutus 'a man who was unmovable and fierce-tempered' and mentions his 'implacability' which his sons called 'harshness'.
3. *killing his own sons*: The story was that they had been found guilty of conspiring to restore the tyrants (*Popl.* 3–6).
4. *that philosophy gives*: On the role of philosophy in the Life and the pair (Intro.): the emphasis on the 'almost ideal' balance of Brutus may suggest, at least for the moment, a better mix than we have seen in Dion. The idea of this 'harmonious mixture' is Platonic (*Republic* 409d–12b).
5. *even those men ... disinterested in his motives*: Notice the skill with which Plutarch not merely introduces the internal comparison with Cassius but also intimates that the killing of Caesar was the great moral issue that the Life has to face. The formulation here favours Brutus, but also shows that there was a case to answer: later in the chapter 'the people who bear him most hatred and ill will on account of Caesar's murder' reinforces the point.
6. *Brutus's mother Servilia ... Servilius Ahala*: Brutus took such things

seriously: he had, it seems, a family tree drawn tracing his descent from L. Brutus and Ahala (presumably based on Atticus's researches: n. 11), and hung it in his house in a room called 'the Parthenon' (Cic. *Att.* 13.40.1); and at some time he struck coins with Brutus on the obverse and Ahala on the reverse, perhaps in 54 BCE (Crawford, *RRC* i.88 and 455–6).

7. *took a dagger under his arm*: In Latin *sub ala*, which was taken as the explanation of the cognomen *Ahala*: Plutarch hints at the etymology here.
8. *Servilius Ahala ... Spurius Maelius ... stabbed him to death*: The episode was dated to 439 BCE. Livy 4.13–14 tells the story differently, with Ahala as *magister equitum* summoning Maelius to trial and chasing him down when he refused to come. Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 12.4 attributes the present version to the Roman annalists L. Cincius Alimentus and L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, and says he does not believe it. Plutarch presumably found it useful to prefer this version, and tell it with some circumstantial detail, because it foreshadows some aspects of the assassination of Caesar (chs. 14–17).
9. *ancestry on his father's side*: No word yet of Brutus's father himself: he was tribune in 83 BCE and a supporter of the consul M. Lepidus in 78, but he was most significant for the circumstances of his death, and Plutarch delays this to ch. 4.
10. *the people ... on account of Caesar's murder*: Cf. n. 5 – but the Posidonius quotation indicates that the issue was raised some time before Caesar's murder (n. 12).
11. *a plebeian house ... men who held office*: The point is a substantial one, as the Iunii were indeed plebeians, whereas one would expect the first consul of the Republic to be a patrician (though there are many other plebeian names among the early consuls: R. M. Ogilvie, *Commentary on Livy* i–v (1965), p. 232, n. 1). Cicero's friend Atticus wrote a history of the *gens* (Nepos *Life of Atticus* 18), and must have faced the problem. 'Only recently' is anyway an exaggeration: the plebeian Iunii Bruti came to prominence in the fourth century BCE.
12. *Posidonius the philosopher*: Posidonius of Apamea: 'the philosopher' is hardly necessary for identification (often though not always Plutarch simply cites him as 'Posidonius'), but like 'Cato the philosopher' in ch. 2 fits the tone: a writer like this would understand a family like this, just as Nicolaus 'the philosopher' is cited in the final chapter (nn. 264, 267). In fact the item presumably figured in Posidonius's *History*. Jacoby prints it as *FGrH* 87 F 40, Edelstein–Kidd in their Cambridge edition of Posidonius (1972–99) as fr. 256. Posidonius died around 51 BCE,

and so he could not have discussed the lineage with an eye to the assassination of Caesar: the phrasing ‘distinguished men of this house who were alive in his own day’ hints at that point.

13. *in the way that has been narrated*: Perhaps a reference to Plutarch’s own fuller account at *Popl.* 6, but Plutarch may just mean ‘has been recounted’ (more generally by historians): that is the way it is taken by Kidd in the Edelstein–Kidd edition (previous n.), translating ‘as the story says’.
14. *a third son ... survived*: That version is implicitly accepted at *Popl.* 3: L. Brutus had ‘several’ children, and ‘the two boys who were adult’ were implicated in the conspiracy.
15. *physical resemblance to the statue of Brutus*: The end of the proem therefore neatly reverts to the beginning, with the statue now serving as testimony to the truth of the tyrannicidal descent which was stated there so firmly.
16. *sister of Cato the philosopher*: In fact half-sister (*Cato* 1 and n. 5).
17. *uncle also became his father-in-law*: When Brutus married Porcia (ch. 13): but in fact Cato was dead by the time of the marriage (45 BCE).
18. *it was the followers of Plato ... attracted him most of all*: On Brutus as Academic philosopher, see Intro. and esp. Sedley, *JRS* 87 (1997), 41–53.
19. *New or Middle Academy ... the Old*: The Old Academy was founded by Plato. In this triple division the Middle was founded by Arcesilaus in the middle of the third century BCE, and the most eminent names of the New Academy were those of Carneades and Clitomachus: see *Elder Cato* 22 for the impact of Carneades when he visited Rome in 155, and *Luc.* 42 with nn. and *Cic.* 4 for the controversies in the middle of the first century. An earlier distinction was simply between ‘Old’ and ‘New’, with Arcesilaus founding the New.
20. *Antiochus of Ascalon*: *Luc.* 28 with n. 145, 42 with n. 233, and *Cic.* 4.
21. *Aristus ... equal to the best*: Which is warmer than the way Plutarch talks about Antiochus himself, *Cic.* 4. Cicero admired Aristus too, and lodged with him in Athens in 51 BCE (*Att.* 5.10.5); it was also at Athens that Brutus first heard Aristus (*Cic. Academica* 1.3.12).
22. *Brutus in his letters*: Presumably Latin letters, unlike the Greek ones of later in the chapter. Plutarch may well have known both groups of letters at first hand (Intro.).
23. *Empylus ... Brutus*: This work may well have figured among Plutarch’s sources for this Life (Intro.).
24. *in his letters*: On these Greek letters and their dubious

authenticity, see Intro.

25. *to the people of Pergamum*: Presumably, if genuine, this was part of the exercise of ‘settling the affairs of the various cities’ mentioned in ch. 28 (spring 43 BCE).
26. *Dolabella*: Chs. 8 and 25 with nn. 56 and 156.
27. *On another occasion*: If genuine, it could have been written at any time in 43–42, as Brutus need not have been anywhere near Samos at the time; the original demand for ‘contributions’ may date from the same phase in 43 (n. 25), or even from his time at Athens (chs. 24–5).
28. *Patareans ... Xanthians*: For the fate of the Xanthians see chs. 30–31; for that of the Patareans, ch. 32. It is not clear to whom this letter might have been addressed: possibly one of the ‘other’ cities who came over once they saw the treatment of the Patareans (ch. 32).
29. *expedition to deal with Ptolemy*: 58–56 (*Cato* 34–9 and nn. there). Plutarch does not feel the need to fill in the complicated background here, probably because (even though *Brutus* is probably the earlier Life to be written up) he is already planning *Cato* as well as part of the same project, and assumes readers will have access to it.
30. *sent ... Canidius to take charge of the king’s treasure*: More on this and on Cato’s distrust at *Cato* 35–6; on Canidius (or Caninius) see *Cato* n. 186.
31. *after he had seen ... Rome*: This gives the impression that Brutus’s role in this was much greater than one would assume from *Cato* 38–9: we cannot be sure that Plutarch had good evidence for this. While in Cyprus Brutus dealt with the city of Salamis in a way that told heavily to his own financial advantage, in a manner that seems most discreditable to a modern reader (*Cic. Att.* 5.21, 6.1–3). If Plutarch knew of this (a big ‘if’), he may have suppressed it as discordant from his picture of the high-principled young student of ethics.
32. *When it came to civil war*: 49 BCE. Plutarch’s narrative moves quickly here, passing over for instance several acts of Brutus’s opposition to Pompey in the late fifties, including the publication of a vigorous pamphlet or speech ‘on the dictatorship of Pompey’ in, presumably, 52 (Quintilian 9.3.95, Seneca *Controversiae* 10.1.8).
33. *put to death ... some years before*: 77 BCE (G–C, p. 239; more details at *Pomp.* 16).
34. *Sestius*: P. Sestius, the tribune of 57 BCE, whom Cicero defended in 56: on his life see R. Kaster’s commentary on *Pro Sestio* (2006), pp. 14–22, 37–8. He held the Cilician command probably as

- proconsul (*MRR* ii.264). After Pharsalus he went over to Caesar.
35. *the great battle*: I.e. Pharsalus, 9 August 48 BCE. Here and in ch. 6, as at *Cato* 55, the outline of events is taken for granted (*Caes.* 42–6 and *Pomp.* 68–73).
 36. *Pompey's army ... near a marsh*: I discussed the topography in *Historia* 22 (1973), 249–59, esp. 252 on the marshy terrain (north-west of the town of Pharsalus, and, if I am right, north of the River Enipeus).
 37. *that Brutus was his own son*: If Brutus was born in 85 BCE (as he probably was), Caesar would only have been about fifteen at the time. That need not preclude either passion or paternity, but the story is probably retrojection of the later affair with Servilia, influenced perhaps by Caesar's exclamation on the Ides of March, 'And you too, my child?' (n. 104). 'My child' need not be interpreted literally, but some may well have taken it so.
 38. *the great Catiline affair ... brought before the senate*: 5 December 63 BCE: *Cato* 24 tells the story similarly, though the point there is Cato's character rather than 'Servilia's passion for Caesar'.
 39. *treated him ... honoured members of his circle*: And, according to *Comp. Dion-Brut.* 3 and *Caes.* 62, spared many of Brutus's friends and fellow-prisoners on his request.
 40. *Brutus's ideas ... came nearest to the truth*: Just as Cato 'worked out that Pompey the Great would make his escape to Egypt or Libya' (*Cato* 56). Other sources do not mention Brutus's significant guesswork here, which may come from a biographical source. Plutarch does not make it sound as if Brutus made any attempt to conceal from Caesar these 'ideas'.
 41. *Pompey ... met his fate*: 28 September 48 BCE (*Pomp.* 77–80).
 42. *his friend Cassius*: C. Cassius Longinus. After his quaestorship in 54 BCE he had fought under Crassus in the disastrous Parthian campaign (*Crass.* 17–33, *MRR* iii.51). He had supported Pompey as tribune in 49, then held a naval command (*MRR* ii.259, 270, 283), but after Pharsalus came east to seek Caesar's pardon.
 43. *spoke up for Deiotarus king of Galatia*: The Greek text is here defective, but it must be Deiotarus that is meant. The reference is not to a trial but to the settlement of the East that Caesar made at Nicaea in 47 BCE after defeating Pharnaces (*Caes.* 50); Brutus's speech on Deiotarus's behalf is also praised by Cicero (*Brut.* 21) and derided by Tacitus's Aper (*Dial.* 21). On Deiotarus see *Cato* 12 and 15 with n. 57 there. As 'an ancestral guest-friend' of Cato (*Cato* 12) he would also be related to Brutus.
 44. *'I do not know ... he wants very badly: '* Cic. *Att.* 14.1.2: 'The person I am staying with [Matius] tells me that Caesar used to say, "It matters a good deal what he wants; but whatever he

wants, he wants it badly.” He noticed this, so Matius says, when Brutus spoke for Deiotarus at Nicaea, for he had been struck with the force and frankness with which he spoke.’ This may well be Plutarch’s source, as it seems that he had read some of Cicero’s letters at the time of *Cicero*: if so, the mild change to ‘I do not know ...’ may prepare Caesar’s later and fatal failure to read Brutus’s intentions.

45. *upon due reflection ... practical reasoning*: The vocabulary is Aristotelian, and reinforces the impression of Brutus as not merely a man of principle, but one who thought philosophically.
46. *an act of diffident respect for others*: The Greek word for this feeling of ‘diffident respect for others’ is *dusopeisthai*, the quality which Plutarch discusses in his moral essay ‘On *dusoxia*’ (*Shame can be a bad thing!*), which itself quotes Brutus’s remark, 530a.
47. *campaign ... in Africa*: The outline is again taken for granted (*Cato* 56–7, *Caes.* 52–4). Caesar left Rome ‘around the winter solstice’ of 47–46 (*Caes.* 52).
48. *governor of Cisalpine Gaul*: Brutus governed this, perhaps as *legatus pro praetore*, during 46 and spring 45: *MRR* ii.301.
49. *While the peoples of the other provinces ... war*: Plutarch has no illusions about the rapacity of Roman administration (cf. e.g. *Elder Cato* 6, *Younger Cato* 12, *Comp. Dem.–Cic.* 3, *Galb.* 4; Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 220, 233 n. 91).
50. *after his return ... tour of Italy*: It had long been possible to regard Cisalpine Gaul as geographically part of ‘Italy’. This ‘return’ seems to be Caesar’s return from Spain in 45 BCE rather than from Africa in 46; he was back in Italy by July 45 but did not return to Rome till October. Like others (*Ant.* 10), Brutus decided to go to meet him in Cisalpine Gaul, even though he had formally handed over the province in March 45 (*Cic. Att.* 12.27.3, 13.11.2, 23.1, 44.1), and this ‘tour’ presumably happened then.
51. *a number of praetorships vacant*: For 44 BCE. Caesar had in fact raised the number of praetorships from eight to first ten, then (for 45) fourteen, then (for 44) sixteen. The elections were apparently held in December 45.
52. *one of Brutus’s sisters*: In fact half-sister, Servilia’s third daughter by D. Iunius Silanus (*Cato* 21 and 30 with n. 143). As the couple had a son who was at least fourteen in 44 BCE (ch. 14 and n. 90), she must have married Cassius in 59 or before. She lived on into her nineties: Tacitus memorably describes her funeral in 22 CE (*Ann.* 3.76).
53. *According to some accounts ... There are others ... one another*: Plutarch again discreetly hints at the partisan nature of the various traditions (cf. ch. 1 and nn. 5, 10). Appian wonders

whether these disagreements between Brutus and Cassius were a charade, intended to deflect Caesar's suspicions of a conspiracy (*Civil Wars* 2.112); for Plutarch they usefully prepare the later edginess between the pair.

54. *brilliant endeavours ... Parthians*: In *Crassus* Cassius several times figures as a voice of caution or sage advice (chs. 18, 20, 22, 23, 27); at the end he launched an enterprising getaway (ch. 29). He then organized the defence of Syria, crushed a revolt in Judaea and in 51 BCE won a notable success over Parthian invaders near Antioch (*MRR* ii.229, 237, 242).
55. '*Cassius ... first praetorship to Brutus*': Similarly *Caes.* 62, adding that Caesar promised Brutus a consulship three years later (i.e. for 41 BCE).
56. *plotting something revolutionary*: Cf. General Intro. IV for such talk of 'revolution'. As at *Caes.* 62, 'plotting something revolutionary' is probably euphemistic for 'plotting to kill Caesar himself', though the language may also be influenced by the 'revolutionary' (i.e. radical) programme that Dolabella had put forward as tribune in 47 BCE (*Ant.* 9 – but it was Antony who then put a stop to it). Now in early 44 he and Antony were again on bad terms (*Ant.* 11), and it may be that, whether or not Plutarch realized it, 'fellows who bother me' points not at suspicion of plotting but at impatience with their quarrelling: Caesar's point would be that he would prefer squabblers to (suspected) conspirators.
57. *fat ... pale and thin ones*: Fatness suggested slow wits, long hair dissolution, while 'pale and thin' points to the studiousness of Cassius and Brutus. Plutarch also tells this story at *Caes.* 62 (where Caesar also has a second remark, 'I don't like the look of Cassius: he is too pale') and at *Ant.* 11.
58. '*Do you imagine ... end its days?*': More punchily at *Caes.* 62, "'Brutus will wait for this skin of mine'" – implying that Brutus certainly had the qualities which would entitle him to power, but that he would not, for the sake of power, behave basely and ungratefully.'
59. *the first man in Rome beyond any dispute*: Not quite the same as having 'such great power' in the previous sentence: it was not unrepublican to be 'the first man in Rome'.
60. *going to take office as aedile*: Presumably he was expecting to hold the office at 47 BCE, though elections had not been held (for such confident hopes cf. *Pomp.* 67). It is not likely that Cassius ever held the office, even though by 47 he had gone over to Caesar (n. 42).
61. *when the city was captured by Calenus*: Q. Fufius Calenus was

Caesar's commander in Achaea in 48 BCE (*MRR* ii.281), and had 'fifteen cohorts around Athens and Megara' at the time of Pharsalus (*Caes.* 43). The affair of the lions was not Megara's only mishap: they resisted more vigorously after the battle than most Greek towns, and Calenus punished them with 'many executions' and by selling the survivors, albeit at a knock-down price that their relatives could afford (*Dio* 42.14).

62. *Faustus, the son of Sulla*: L. Cornelius Sulla Faustus. He was born before 85 BCE (*Sull.* 22), and he and Cassius were indeed around the same age, to judge from their quaestorships (both in 54). This incident will be after Sulla's death in 78, which explains the 'guardians and relatives'. If historical, it will date either to 78–77, before Pompey left for Spain, or after his return in 71; perhaps the boys sound more like eight-year-olds than sixteen-year-olds, but 'take the matter to court' may suggest the later date. It may date to Pompey's consulship of 70, though one does not need to be a consul to be dragged into the squabbles of other people's children. Pompey may have been impressed by the young man: Faustus later married his daughter.
63. *boast of his father's absolute power*: Val. Max. 3.1.3, telling the same story, makes Faustus 'praise the proscription that his father had carried out, and say that when he was old enough he would do the same'.
64. *Faustus's guardians*: Presumably Lucullus is meant (*Luc.* 4), but to name him here would complicate the story.
65. *that Junius Brutus who had overthrown the rule of the kings*: Ch. 1 and n. 1: the statue that was mentioned there now becomes relevant as well as the man it commemorated. At *Caes.* 62 Plutarch mentions only the graffiti on Brutus's own tribunal. App. *Civil Wars* 2.112 and *Dio* 44.12 mention both sets.
66. *'Brutus, you are asleep'*: Or possibly 'Brutus, are you asleep?' The graffito artist may not have been diligent enough to punctuate his Latin, so it may have been ambiguous from the outset.
67. *as I have described in detail in Caesar*: Chs. 60–61, but *Caes.* 57 adds that those proposing excessive honours included his enemies: 'Their aim was to collect as many grievances against him as they could, so that they would have the best possible case for their attack.' These enemies need not have included Brutus and Cassius themselves, but in *Brutus* Plutarch anyway prefers not to sully the anti-tyrant cause with such Machiavellian ploys.
68. *consecrate ... sacrifice*: The sacrificial imagery recurs at *Caes.* 66 as Caesar is struck down: 'He was run through like some wild beast, rolling to and fro in everyone's hands, for each person there needed to begin the sacrifice and taste of the slaughter.' It marks

the critical moment in each narrative, the decision to act here, the act itself in *Caesar*.

69. *Kalends of March*: Possibly but not necessarily an error for the 'Ides': the possibility of declaring Caesar king of *the provinces* was going to be discussed on the Ides, or so it was rumoured (*Caes.* 60, 64); but similar rumours may already have been in circulation before the 1 March meeting. Kingship had been in the air for some time (*Caes.* 60–61).
70. *'But do you think ... expect you to be'*: App. *Civil Wars* 2.113 recounts this encounter very similarly, though Plutarch puts more weight 1. on this as a reconciliation (Appian does not have the quarrel anyway, cf. n. 53), and 2. on the support that can be expected with Brutus as a figurehead.
71. *Quintus Ligarius*: The manuscripts have 'Gaius', but this must be Quintus Ligarius, a Pompeian supporter who was accused before Caesar in 46 BCE and successfully defended by Cicero (*Cic.* 39, naming 'Quintus'). Cicero's speech survives. Possibly Plutarch got it wrong here but right in *Cicero*, but it is more likely that we should emend the text.
72. *men of courage ... no fear of death*: Suet. *Iul.* 80 says there were over sixty.
73. *They were afraid ... essential*: Plutarch had written similarly in the earlier *Cicero* (ch. 42): this item probably dates from his reading for that Life, and he has integrated this with his later reading; 'speed would be essential' both in the sense that they had to strike quickly before Caesar left for Parthia on March 18 (ch. 22), and because the deed itself would require a speedy, deft attack.
74. *Statilius the Epicurean*: Intro.; *Cato* 65, 66 and 73 and n. 324. It is not said in *Younger Cato* that he was an Epicurean: that is an interesting insight into the way Cato's charismatic philosophical appeal was not limited to Stoics (Intro. *Cato*).
75. *Favonius ... besotted with Cato*: Literally 'lover of Cato', but this is probably not to be taken literally (*Cato* 32 and n. 172, 46 and n. 242).
76. *an illegal monarchy*: Perhaps an echo of Plato *Politicus* 302e, as suggested by Sedley, *JRS* 87 (1997), 48.
77. *a man of sense ... unthinking people*: An Epicurean doctrine (Sedley, *ibid.*, 45 and n. 28, though here expressed rather harshly: Plutarch had no sympathy for it).
78. *Labeo*: Pacuvius Antistius Labeo, who later served Brutus as a legate (*MRR* ii.364) and instructed his slaves to kill him after Philippi (ch. 51). He was the father of a famous Augustan jurisconsult.
79. *Brutus Albinus*: D. Iunius Brutus Albinus, who had served Caesar

with distinction in Gaul and in the Civil War: he too, like our Brutus, had been rewarded by appointment to the governorship of Cisalpine Gaul (for 44 BCE, *MRR* ii.328) and the promise of a consulship, in his case for 42. Despite the lukewarmness here about his courage, he played a crucial role on the Ides, keeping his nerve and persuading Caesar to come to the senate despite his reluctance (*Caes.* 64).

80. *the idea of a conspiracy was found unbelievable*: The language is circumspect, leaving it unclear whether it was people in general or Caesar in particular, despite the suspicions and rumours mentioned in ch. 8, who found it unbelievable.
81. *as I have mentioned above*: Ch. 2 and n. 17.
82. *when she was still very young*: Not as young as all that: the marriage took place in 45 BCE, and Porcia would have been in her late twenties. Plutarch discreetly avoids mentioning that Brutus discarded his first wife, Claudia (daughter of Appius Claudius Caecus, consul 54), in order to marry Porcia.
83. *a widow*: For her first marriage to M. Calpurnius Bibulus, the consul of 59 BCE, see *Cato* 25 and n. 116. Bibulus had died in 48.
84. *Bibulus*: L. Calpurnius Bibulus, the only surviving son of three: two others had been killed in Alexandria in 50 BCE (*MRR* ii.250). He was not particularly 'little', as he was old enough to stand for an augurate in 43: perhaps fifteen or sixteen now.
85. *Memoirs of Brutus ... extant*: Probably one of Plutarch's sources (Intro.), and the naming here may be a coded indication that the following story of his mother comes from this book.
86. *find that I can conquer pain*: And so, presumably, can be trusted not to let the secret out no matter what her enemies might do to her. Val. Max. 3.2.15 makes the point a different one: 'I wanted, Brutus, to see how calmly I could embrace my own death if your enterprise failed.'
87. *all the men ... great deed had been accomplished*: So also App. *Civil Wars* 2.114, adding that 'this was what was said to have happened in the case of Romulus, when his kingship had turned to tyranny'. In Plutarch's narrative, here the precedents that matter are those of the first Brutus and of Ahala (ch. 1 and nn.): but the Romulus precedent is important in *Romulus* itself (Pelling, *P&H*, ch. 7). Other authors add other motives: that they could rely on Caesar being there (Nic. Dam. 81); that Caesar would be less on his guard, and that the conspirators could easily hide their daggers in their document carriers while others would be unarmed (Dio 44.16.1–2).
88. *that quarter of the city ... theatre*: This 'quarter' is in the Campus Martius, north-west of the Flaminian Circus and south-west of the

Pantheon, about half a mile to the west of the forum. On the theatre see *Pomp.* 40, 42, and esp. 52 for its opening and the attendant celebrations in 55 BCE. The great rectangular portico lay to the east of the theatre, and the senate was to meet in the ‘*curia of Pompey*’ which opened off that.

89. *Ides of March*: 15 March 44 BCE.
90. *toga virilis*: ‘Manly toga’: so the boy was fourteen or a little older (n. 52).
91. *Caesar ... failed to arrive*: Caesar eventually arrived around 11 a.m.: the senators had been assembled for several hours. For this and other details of the day, see N. Horsfall, *Greece & Rome* 21 (1974), 191–9; J. T. Ramsey in *In Pursuit of Wissenschaft: Festschrift für William M. Calder III* (2008), pp. 351–63.
92. *The sacrificial victim ... soothsayers*: Much more on this, memorably, at *Caes.* 63: the *Caesar* and *Brutus* accounts interlock with minimal repetition.
93. *Casca*: P. Servilius Casca Longus, who was to play a critical role in the violence (ch. 17). He was to be tribune in 43 BCE, then fought for Brutus and Cassius in the East in 42 (*MRR* ii.340, 366, though cf. also iii.194–5). For his role at Philippi see ch. 45. He and his brother apparently killed themselves after the battle.
94. *Popilius Laenas*: He may be the ‘Laenas’ who promised Cicero a favour in 45 (*Att.* 12.13–14), but we know no more about him (*MRR* ii.495).
95. *news that his wife was dying*: The story coheres closely with that of ch. 13, and does not altogether support Porcia’s confidence there in her physical resilience (possibly we are meant to infer that she was still weak from her wound). Still, the drift is favourable to the concerned Porcia as well as to the resolute Brutus, and the story presumably comes from the same source as ch. 13 (Bibulus?).
96. *had decided ... on the pretext of being indisposed*: *Caes.* 64 gives more details, telling events from Caesar’s viewpoint (whereas *Brutus* here recounts in the order that Brutus discovered what was happening – ‘now the news arrived ...’). Caesar’s first thought was to send a message postponing the sitting, but D. Brutus (n. 79) pointed out to him the offence that this would cause: if he must postpone, better to come and announce it himself. *Nic. Dam.* 83–7 and *Suet. Iul.* 81 add that Caesar really was ill. *Caes.* 64–5 also has more detail on Caesar’s journey to the senate-meeting, including the famous ‘The Ides of March have come ...’ story of the soothsayer.
97. *the conspirators, as I shall now call them*: The point disappears in English: the Greek for ‘conspirators’, *sunomotai*, is literally ‘those

who had sworn together', and Plutarch apologizes for the term because they did *not* swear an oath (ch. 12).

98. *Cassius ... as though it could hear his words*: *Caes.* 66 makes the point that this is unepicurean behaviour (an Epicurean would think that death finishes everything, and that gods would not concern themselves with human preoccupations). In *Brutus* Cassius's problematic Epicureanism is delayed till later (ch. 37).
99. *Trebonius*: C. Trebonius, who as tribune in 55 BCE had proposed the law conferring five-year commands on Crassus and Pompey (*Cato* 43 and n. 221, *Pomp.* 52); he had fought well for Caesar in Gaul and in the Civil War, and had been made suffect consul in 45. Plutarch is right in saying here that Trebonius delayed Antony outside the senate; in *Caes.* 66 he oddly says it was D. Brutus (see also *Ant.* 13 and nn. 79–81). For his Asian proconsulship see ch. 19 and *MRR* ii.330. He was put to death by Dolabella at Smyrna in early 43 (*MRR* ii.349–50).
100. *engaged Mark Antony ... and kept him outside*: See *Ant.* 13 for Brutus's role in the discussion whether Antony should be killed as well: this point would have interrupted the pace of the narrative here, and Plutarch delays it till ch. 18.
101. *Tillius Cimber*: L. Tillius Cimber, another who had been well treated by Caesar (*Cic. Phil.* 2.27) and was influential with him (*Cic. Ad Fam.* 6.12.2). He had probably been praetor in 45 (*MRR* ii.307), and had been appointed governor of Bithynia (ch. 19 with n. 117, *MRR* ii.330); for his later career in the East, see *MRR* ii.349 and 366). He probably died at Philippi. His brother may be the man mentioned at Horace *Satires* 1.6.24–5, who lost and then regained the status of senator (*MRR* iii.205).
102. *to clasp Caesar's hands*: Nic. Dam. 88 makes it clearer: Cimber was trying to restrain Caesar's hands within his toga and prevent him from rising to resist the attack. According to Suet. *Iul.* 82.2, Caesar stabbed Casca back through the arm with his writing stylus.
103. *speaking in Greek ... to help him*: He perhaps spoke Greek to evoke Hellenic traditions of tyrannicide. His brother was Gaius, and he eventually shared Publius's fate after Philippi (n. 93); it is uncertain here whether he was one of the plotters, or simply called on as an onlooker. Dio 44.52 has a (dubious) story of Gaius issuing a proclamation that he was not involved, as he feared he might share the fate of Cinna (ch. 20), but Nic. Dam. 89 has him joining in the murder and striking a crucial blow.
104. *he saw Brutus ... with his dagger drawn*: This was when, according to Suet. *Iul.* 82.2 and Dio 44.19, he said to Brutus, 'And you too, my child?' (n. 37).

105. *with such a frenzy of violence*: Caesar's body showed twenty-three wounds (*Caes.* 66, App., Suet.), or perhaps thirty-five (Nic. Dam.).
106. *Brutus received a stab in the hand*: From Cassius, according to Nic. Dam. 89.
107. *Brutus ... opposed this idea*: So also *Ant.* 13, but there Plutarch does not mention Brutus's hopes that Antony might be won over. That emphasis here prepares for his disappointment in ch. 29.
108. *calculated to please the people*: Plutarch discreetly passes over the way that (if App. *Civil Wars* 2.120–21 can be trusted) the conspirators had already sent some offers of money to win goodwill, and their use of D. Brutus's gladiators (ch. 12) to serve as bodyguards as they came down from the Capitol (Nic. Dam. 98–9).
109. *many of the most distinguished men ... to the rostra*: Contrast App. *Civil Wars* 2.122, who says that Cassius and Brutus came down alone.
110. *an audience of mixed composition*: App. *Civil Wars* 2.120 suggests that this phrase reflects a more extended discussion in the source they share (presumably Pollio: Intro.), stressing the miscegenation of Roman citizens with foreigners, the extensive manumission of slaves, the influx to Rome from other parts of Italy and the presence of discharged soldiers waiting to leave for their new settlements.
111. *the moment that Cinna began to denounce Caesar*: This is L. Cornelius Cinna, son of the Cinna who was prominent in the Sullan Civil Wars and brother of Caesar's first wife Cornelia (*Caes.* 1). He was praetor, but now ostentatiously discarded his insignia as owed to a tyrant (*MRR* ii.320). The more detailed account of App. *Civil Wars* 2.121–2 suggests that Plutarch may here have reordered events: first Cinna spoke, followed by Dolabella (ch. 8); then Cassius and Brutus came down (alone, n. 109) and spoke; then, still apprehensive, they returned to the Capitol.
112. *considering that they had no share in the deed*: The phrasing hints at a point which Plutarch knew (*Caes.* 67, cf. App. *Civil Wars* 2.119, Dio 44.21) but here suppresses, that some were already falsely claiming to have been co-conspirators.
113. *On the following day*: This telescopes events and omits a day, one spent in intense consultation. This senate-meeting was held on the morning of 17 March.
114. *Plancus*: L. Munatius Plancus, the future consul of 42 BCE and partisan first of Antony, then (*Ant.* 58) of Octavian.
115. *the consuls ... conferring honours upon them*: No other source indicates that such a measure was passed, though something along these lines may have been suggested by Ti. Claudius Nero

(Suet. *Tiberius* 4). Plutarch gives the impression of more senatorial unanimity than there was.

116. *At daybreak the senators met again*: But at *Ant.* 14 Plutarch speaks of only one meeting, i.e. that of 17 March. It is uncertain which version is accurate.
117. *distribution of the provinces*: Trebonius, Cimber and D. Brutus Albinus (n. 79) had probably been assigned their provinces by Caesar, and these would now have been confirmed. But Brutus's and Cassius's provinces had not yet been allocated, and Plutarch's account is here confused.
118. *not be buried secretly but with due honour*: This hints at one extreme anti-Caesar proposal that the body should be cast out unburied (Dio 44.35.1), as might be appropriate for a tyrant: perhaps into the Tiber (Suet. *Iul.* 82.4). Caesar's relatives would have had to retrieve the body and bury it secretly.
119. *when it became known*: Probably on 19 March.
120. *75 drachmas*: I.e. 300 sesterces.
121. *Antony ... funeral oration over his body*: Probably on 20 March. The descriptions of this speech here and at *Ant.* 14 inspired Shakespeare's version (*Julius Caesar*, III.2), though his Antony is more premeditated and calculating than Plutarch's. Suet. *Iul.* 84.2 suggests a more restrained performance, but Plutarch is likely to be right.
122. *in the case of Clodius the demagogue*: After he had been killed by Milo in 52 BCE. The rioting at the funeral was then so serious that the senate-house was set on fire (Cic. *Pro Milone.* 91–2, Dio 40.49 etc.).
123. *solemnly set fire to it*: The Greek word (*kathagizo*) has a ritual resonance, and the reference to the 'many temples, sanctuaries, and holy places' is pointed: it may be that the rioters thought the place appropriate, or Plutarch may be suggesting sacrilege – or both.
124. *Cinna ... a friend of Caesar's*: More detail at *Caes.* 68. This is the poet Helvius Cinna, whose mini-epic *Smyrna* is acclaimed by Catullus 95: T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet and other Essays* (1974), pp. 44–58.
125. *the Cinna ... denounced Caesar in his speech*: Ch. 18 and n. 111.
126. *Brutus and his party ... left the city*: Early to mid April 44 BCE.
127. *city mobs ... unstable in their impulses*: Cf. the similar dismissiveness towards the Roman plebs at ch. 18, where it may be drawn from Pollio (Intro. and n. 110 above). In this Life Plutarch will be similar dismissive about ordinary soldiers (ch. 23 and n. 139). Such a suite of aristocratic values is not out of character for him, but it is rarely so explicit or emphatic: it goes

- with the Life's respect for Brutus's political traditionalism.
128. *Antony ... monarchy*: See *Ant.* 15, where Plutarch uses similar language.
 129. *the public games ... great expense and magnificence*: The Ludi Apollinares (7–13 July 44 BCE). They were given in Brutus's absence by his colleague C. Antonius, Antony's brother (App. *Civil Wars* 3.23).
 130. *Artists of Dionysus*: Powerful guilds of actors, musicians and dancers (*Luc.* 29 and *Ant.* 56 with n. 271).
 131. *writing to Cicero ... games*: On 2 July Cicero wrote to Atticus (15.26.1) mentioning a letter from Brutus with 'the same old request that I should attend his games' (Shackleton Bailey). The emphasis on Cicero here prepares for Brutus's disappointment in him in the next chapter.
 132. *the young Caesar Octavian*: Literally just 'the young' (or 'new') 'Caesar'. Plutarch then calls him 'Caesar' throughout. Modern readers would find that confusing, and here and in other Lives he will be called 'Octavian' in the translation; but we should not forget the immense political advantage given him by that name of Caesar (*Comp. Dion–Brut.* 4) – 'you, boy, who owe everything to your name', as Antony bitterly said (*Cic. Phil.* 13.24–5).
 133. *a second ... turn to events*: The first being perhaps Antony's 'change of attitude' (the same word in the Greek of ch. 21 as that for 'turn to events' here), perhaps simply Caesar's death. Octavian arrived in Rome in April, then again in early May (*Ant.* 16 with n. 93).
 134. *Caesar's niece*: Atia, daughter of Caesar's sister Julia and M. Atius Balbus.
 135. *expedition ... against the Parthians*: See n. 73.
 136. *the money ... left them in Caesar's will*: Ch. 20 and n. 120. More on this, and on Octavian's other manoeuvrings, at *Ant.* 16.
 137. *He noticed, he wrote ...*: The rest of the chapter reworks the letters which survive in Cicero's collection *Ad Brutum* as 1.16 (Brutus to Cicero) and 1.17 (Brutus to Atticus), e.g.: 'If you are pleased with Octavius as the person who has to authorize our safety, you will be seen not to have turned your back on a tyrant but to have been looking for a more friendly version of one' (1.16.7); 'Cicero does not despise servitude, provided only that it is an honourable one' (1.17.4); 'our ancestors were not willing to tolerate even a parent as their master' (1.17.6; cf. next n.). The authenticity of those letters is disputed: against, Shackleton Bailey in his 1980 edn., pp. 10–14; for, persuasively, Moles in Mossman (ed.), *Plutarch and his Intellectual World*, pp. 141–68. Plutarch here has no doubts: contrast ch. 53 and n. 266 (Intro.)

138. *even mild tyrants*: This is the reading of the manuscripts, and if correct it picks up the ‘mildness’ of Brutus’s own character (chs. 1, 29) – mild, but not so mild as to put up with even the mildest tyranny. But the point is not very effective, and we should perhaps read ‘would not tolerate even their fathers as tyrants’, closely echoing the letter to Atticus, 1.17.6 (previous n.).
139. *the soldiers ... sold their allegiance to the highest bidder*: This is not out of line with Plutarch’s judgement elsewhere (esp. *Galb.* 1), but it is more strongly put than usual, again (cf. n. 127) reflecting the conservative prejudices of Brutus himself. It is not very fair: the soldiers’ allegiances were strongly felt, and more than once they acted as restraining influences on their generals (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 221–2).
140. *He therefore resolved to abandon Italy*: Brutus finally left Italy in late August 44 BCE. The chronology is a little awry here: Antony’s and Octavian’s struggle to buy the goodwill of the troops (previous n.) was later, in October–November.
141. *taking from his arms their little son ... husband*: That is, the scene of *Iliad* 6.482–93. And Brutus, like Hector, is indeed doomed; and Porcia’s fate, like Andromache’s, will indeed depend on his, though in Porcia’s case it will be a distraught death (ch. 53) rather than servitude.
142. *Acilius*: Perhaps the ‘Acilius’ who survived the proscriptions adventurously (App. *Civil Wars* 4.39).
143. *Hector ... my loving husband*: *Iliad* 6.429–30.
144. *Work at your loom ... servants*: *Iliad* 6.491.
145. *Porcia’s son, Bibulus*: Ch. 13 and n. 84, and p. 256.
146. *granted various public honours*: Including the placing of statues of Brutus and Cassius next to those of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, their Athenian counterparts as liberators and tyrannicides (Dio 47.20.4).
147. *Theomnestus ... Peripatetic school*: Not much is known of Theomnestus. Cratippus of Pergamum had come to Athens a few years earlier. Cicero met him in Ephesus in 51 BCE, got Caesar to grant him Roman citizenship and mentions him admiringly several times in *Div.* 1.
148. *He planned ... Roman armies in Macedonia*: The proconsul in 44 BCE was Q. Hortensius. On 28 November 44 the senate assigned the province to Antony’s brother C. Antonius (n. 129, *MRR* ii.319); Brutus was concerned to secure Macedonia before his arrival.
149. *all the young Romans ... to his cause*: Including Horace (*Epistles* 2.2.43–7, etc.).
150. *Cicero’s son ... detestation of tyranny*: Brutus’s approval of young

Marcus Cicero is confirmed by a surviving letter (Cic. *Ad Brut.* 2.3.6): ‘Your son Cicero shows a degree of industry, resilience, diligence, greatness of spirit and manifold attentiveness that demonstrates to me that he never forgets who is his father.’ But Plutarch seems to be citing a different letter, one which after ch. 22 carries some edge: young Cicero, Brutus implies, is outdoing his father. This is another item (cf. Intro.) that Plutarch may be recalling from his reading for *Cicero* (cf. *Cic.* 45).

151. *their commander*: M. Appuleius (*MRR* ii.327). It is possible that the text should be emended to include this name: so K. Ziegler in the Teubner text.
152. *It is fate ... Leto's son*: *Iliad* 16.849. The morbidly eerie quotation is discussed by Moles, *American Journal of Philology* 104 (1983), 249–56, who suggests that Brutus was referring to the political reverses of the previous summer, in particular his inability to celebrate the Ludi Apollinares (n. 129). In any case it carries on the Homeric allusiveness from the suggestions of Hector's death in ch. 23. In the *Iliad*, Patroclus goes on to prophesy the death of his killer Hector, and Hector's own death in Book 22 closely echoes Patroclus's killing. Brutus, too, might now seem, consciously or unconsciously, to be fitting himself into the sequence.
153. *the password ... was 'Apollo'*: Val. Max. 1.5.7, telling the same tale of the banquet utterance, makes a similar point but says that it was Antony and Octavian who used the ‘Apollo’ password. If so, Plutarch may have transferred the item deliberately from one side to the other (Pelling, *P&H*, p. 110, n. 9); but perhaps both sides were playing for Apollo's favour and exploiting his name (A. Gosling, *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986), 586–9).
154. *Antistius*: C. Antistius Vetus, quaestor pro praetore in Syria. At *MRR* ii.327 Broughton assumes that Plutarch has confused Antistius with Appuleius (n. 151), but notice ‘he too’: Plutarch is distinguishing Antistius from Appuleius, and noting that both men handed over their money.
155. *remnants of Pompey's army ... Thessaly*: Still there, surprisingly enough, after the defeat at Pharsalus four and a half years earlier (so also Dio 47.21.3).
156. *Cinna was conducting to Dolabella in Asia*: Late 44 BCE. Dolabella (chs. 2, 8) was now taking up the proconsulship of Syria (*MRR* ii.317, 344). This Cinna, to be distinguished from the Cinnas of chs. 18 and 20, was Cinna's quaestor (*MRR* ii.325).
157. *his Parthian campaign*: See n. 73.
158. *Hortensius ... handed over the province to him*: Cf. n. 148. Hortensius remained loyal to Brutus: when a few months later the

senate reassigned Macedonia to Brutus, Hortensius continued to govern the province under Brutus's overall command (MRR ii.345–6).

159. *Gaius ... Epidamnus and Apollonia*: Gaius Antonius arrived in Macedonia at the end of 44 or in January 43. P. Vatinius was proconsul of Illyricum (MRR ii.330–31).
160. *boulimia*: The term does not have its modern particular sense, but was used more generally of a state of exhaustion caused by intense hunger and/or exposure.
161. *I have discussed ... elsewhere*: In *Table Talk* (6.8.693e–5d), where the Brutus incident is cited as a prime example. The *Table Talk* version is probably right in placing the incident as Brutus was approaching Apollonia rather than, as it seems here, Epidamnus; it also gives several different medical explanations for bulimia, of which only the first and the last are mentioned here, given in *Table Talk* as respectively Aristotle's and Plutarch's own. I discuss the relationship of the two versions in a paper to be published in a collection on *Table Talk*, ed. A. Oikonomopoulou and F. Klotz (Oxford, 2010).
162. *gates of the city*: Probably Apollonia, though the account here gives the impression that the Apollonia sequence was separate and later (previous n.).
163. *defeated by the young Cicero*: Whom Brutus duly mentioned in his dispatch to the senate (Cic. *Ad Brut.* 2.5.2).
164. *they surrendered both themselves and their general*: Mid March 43 BCE (MRR ii.342).
165. *insignia of rank*: Which he would have as proconsul of Macedonia, including twelve lictors.
166. *Cicero wrote ... Gaius executed*: This is a recurrent theme in the extant letters (Cic. *Ad Brut.* 2.5.3–5, 1.2.3, 1.3.3).
167. *had him transferred to a ship*: Possibly a misunderstanding: Dio 47.24 has Brutus put Antonius's quaestor and subordinate officers on board a ship.
168. *when they asked for pardon Brutus granted it*: More details at Dio 47.23–4, showing that Brutus was not as lenient as all that: he executed a few himself, and exploited divisions among the mutineers to get some of them to murder others. That would not suit Plutarch's Brutus at all.
169. *the senate ... driven his rival out of Italy*: The Mutina campaign of spring 43 BCE (*Ant.* 17).
170. *a decree ... in command of his provinces*: The chronology is simplified here. The senate ratified Brutus's control of Macedonia, Achaëa and Illyricum in February 43 BCE (Cic. *Phil.* 10), i.e. before the Mutina campaign was decided; then, after that campaign,

passed a second resolution calling on Brutus to return in arms to Italy (MRR ii.346).

171. *appointment as consul*: 19 August 43 BCE.
172. *his Memoirs*: See Intro. (this is fr. 8 P. = fr. 10 M. = fr. 6 Smith).
173. *Lucius Cornificius ... Marcus Agrippa*: Cornificius was tribune in this year, and later consul in 35 BCE; Agrippa may also have been a tribune (MRR ii.340–41).
174. *Publius Silicius*: P. Silicius Corona: as a juror, he openly voted for acquittal.
175. *formed the triumvirate*: Late October or November 43 BCE: *Ant.* 19–20.
176. *two hundred men who were to be killed*: At *Cic.* 46 Plutarch says that ‘more than 200’ were killed, at *Ant.* 20 ‘300’. App. *Civil Wars* 4.7 also has ‘300’, and that was probably Pollio’s number: Plutarch may have misremembered here (General Intro. III). Livy said 130 (*Perioche* 120) or 132 (the figure given at Orosius 6.18.10, and Orosius is normally dependent on Livy). This number refers merely to the senators sentenced to death. There were also many knights, perhaps 2,000 (Appian’s number).
177. *The dead included Cicero*: 7 December 43 BCE (a full narrative at *Cic.* 47).
178. *Hortensius*: See nn. 148, 158. Antonius was executed in December 43 or early 42: MRR ii.342.
179. *Brutus Albinus ... his kinsman*: D. Brutus, ch. 12 and n. 79. He had been killed by a Gallic chieftain, on Antony’s orders, in summer 43 BCE. The blood-relationship of the two Bruti has not been mentioned before: it was not very close.
180. *Antony had him executed over the tomb of his brother*: *Ant.* 22.
181. *Brutus comments*: The present tense indicates that he does so in a written document that Plutarch is citing as a source: presumably in a letter, whether or not genuine (Intro.), which has not survived.
182. *Brutus now crossed into Asia with his army*: In early 42 BCE. He had already crossed into Asia once in 43 and returned.
183. *hurry back and rescue their fellow-countrymen*: As they had been called upon by the senate to do in mid 43 BCE (n. 170). But App. *Civil Wars* 4.63–5 makes the chronology clearer and shows that such language was no longer apposite: Brutus was claiming that Octavian and Antony ‘were already crossing the Adriatic’, and that was the reason why Cassius needed to abandon his Egyptian plans.
184. *Cassius was the older man*: Not by much, if at all. Roman careers were governed by age-qualifications for the various offices: Cassius’s quaestorship fell in 54 BCE (n. 62), Brutus’s in 53, and

the two men's praetorships fell in the same year (44).

185. *Pompey the Great ... title of authority*: Plutarch has no illusions about Pompey's aspirations (cf. *Caes.* 28, *Pomp.* 75).
186. *Brutus ... the individual*: Taking further the theme of ch. 8 (cf. Intro.). This sentence is one of several in this chapter that are echoed in *Comp. Dion-Brut.* (ch. 3).
187. *he writes to Atticus*: This letter too (cf. n. 181) is lost. J. L. Moles, *Latomus* 42 (1983), 763–7, convincingly argues for its authenticity.
188. *Cassius ... unreasonable severity*: More details at App. *Civil Wars* 4.67–73, describing a sea-battle, then the city's fall, then Cassius's execution of fifty citizens and ruthless exaction of money.
189. *Naucrates the demagogue*: There may be some (slightly forced) play with the language of Cassius's friends earlier in the chapter: they had accused Brutus of playing the demagogue to win his troops' goodwill, but now he tries, unsuccessfully, to outwit the true Lycian demagogue by playing for Lycian goodwill. In each case people are not giving Brutus proper credit for his genuine goodness.
190. *a strong wind ... blaze*: App. *Civil Wars* 4.76–80 has two separate Xanthian attempts to set fire to the engines, but these have no connection with the 'funeral pyres that the Xanthians had previously prepared' within the walls: they also then set some of their own buildings alight. Dio 47.34 has the Romans breaking through the blaze of the engines and firing the city themselves. Herodotus's narrative of the events of 546–45 (next n.), when the Xanthians similarly fuelled their own flames, may have coloured these accounts.
191. *in the time of the Persian Empire ... destroyed themselves*: Herodotus 1.176 describes the destruction of Xanthus at the hands of the Persian general Harpagus (546–45).
192. *Cassius ... compelled the Rhodians ... 500 talents*: Ch. 30 and n. 188. The contrast of Cassius's severity and Brutus's mildness was doubtless embedded in the tradition, but App. *Civil Wars* 4.81 suggests it is overstated: Brutus threatened the Patarans with the same penalties and rewards for informers as Cassius had used at Rhodes. Appian too, however, adds a story of Brutus's leniency.
193. *held a council ... divided*: More at *Pomp.* 77, which also gives details of Theodotus: he had been hired as a teacher of rhetoric' to the thirteen-year-old king Ptolemy XIV, and he, Achillas, and Pothinus were the most influential figures at court.
194. *'A dead man does not bite'*: That sounds proverbial, like the later *mortui non mordent* ('dead men don't bite'), said to have been used by an adviser urging Elizabeth I to kill Mary Queen of Scots, or

the more specific ‘a dead dog does not bite’ (*canis mortuus non mordet*). As those formulations show, the punning word-play makes it work better in Latin – but would Theodotus have been speaking Latin?

195. *thus fell Pompey the Great*: 28 September 48 BCE (*Pomp.* 77–80).
196. *When Caesar arrived ... the fate they deserved*: *Pomp.* 80.
197. *discovered by Brutus*: So also *Pomp.* 80; App. *Civil Wars* 2.90 says it was by Cassius.
198. *Theodotus ... punished*: Brutus inflicted ‘every possible torture’ before killing Theodotus (*Pomp.* 80), a detail that would not suit the emphasis here on his moderation but does suit the emphasis in *Pompey* on Theodotus getting his deserts.
199. *Brutus ... to join him in Sardis*: June/July 42 BCE. On Plutarch’s treatment of this quarrel see Intro.
200. *saluted both men as Imperator*: The regular salutation after a victory.
201. *Marcus Favonius*: Ch. 12 with *Cato* nn. 172, 242.
202. *Be ruled by me ... than you*: *Iliad* 1.259. Nestor is speaking to Achilles and Agamemnon. Favonius was about five years older than Brutus and Cassius.
203. *bogus Cynic ... impudent dog*: Followers of the philosophical school were known as Cynics (dog-like, hence the word-play here) because of the disdain they affected for normal social manners.
204. *the central couch*: The Romans placed three couches round their dinner-tables, leaving the fourth side open. The central couch was the seat of honour.
205. *Lucius Pella*: A mysterious name and person. He has been identified with two other mysterious people, L. Iulius Mocilla, named as an ex-praetor in Brutus’s army (*Nepos Atticus* 11), and L. Livius Ocella, mentioned in several Cicero letters: the standard Teubner and Budé editions of Plutarch in fact print ‘Ocella’, perhaps rashly. In his commentary on the *Nepos* passage N. Horsfall wonders if ‘Mocilla’ is a garbling of the conspirator L. Tillius Cimber (n. 101), who was now serving with Brutus and Cassius (App. *Civil Wars* 4.102): if so and if our ‘Pella’ too is the same person, Plutarch did not realize it, for this man seems to be introduced as someone new.
206. *on the point of crossing from Asia*: I.e. crossing the Hellespont, from Abydus (*Caes.* 69).
207. *he was a light sleeper ... only a few hours*: As we have already seen at chs. 4 and 13.
208. *a strange and horrible apparition*: See Intro. on the relation of this to *Dion* 2 and *Comp. Dion–Brutus*, and on the relation to the dream which saves Octavian at ch. 41. Ch. 48 then recounts the return of

- the phantom. The story is also told, memorably, at *Caes.* 69.
209. *‘Our doctrine ... is that by no means everything that we see or experience is real or true’*: In fact Epicureans emphasized the general veracity of the senses. It is only the end of Cassius’s speech, on questions of existence and on the presumed behaviour of spirits and gods, that strikes a truly Epicurean note.
210. *When they reached ... opposite Thasos*: Brutus and Cassius arrived in the region of Philippi in September 42 BCE.
211. *Norbanus*: C. Norbanus, praetor in (probably) 43, later consul in 38. He and L. Decidius Saxa had been sent by the triumvirs in command of an advance force of eight legions: *MRR* ii.366, iii.150.
212. *Symbolon*: A mountain near the coast south and south-west of Philippi: more detail at App. *Civil Wars* 4.102–4, showing that the manoeuvring was a little further east, around the Sapaeon gorge. Norbanus was forced to fall back towards Amphipolis (*CAH* x2.7–8).
213. *Octavian’s advance was delayed by his sickness*: After crossing the Adriatic Octavian stayed, sick, at Dyrrhachium for a time: he was ill for most of the campaign (*Ant.* 22).
214. *Antony ... hurried to the rescue*: He had initially been delayed at Brundisium, but made good speed once he crossed.
215. *Brutus’s force ... smaller in numbers than Octavian’s*: App. *Civil Wars* 4.108 says that both sides had nineteen legions, but the triumvirs’ legions were fuller than the Liberators’. The triumvirs had 13,000 cavalry, the Liberators 20,000.
216. *trained his officers ... austere standard of living*: Pliny *Natural History* 33.39 records a letter of Brutus from Philippi criticizing his officers for wearing golden brooches.
217. *Cassius did not wish ... Brutus ... vast expenses of war*: Other authors present a different picture: App. *Civil Wars* 4.108 has both Brutus and Cassius wanting to prolong the war and exhaust the enemy for lack of supplies; Dio 47.38 agrees that they both wanted to delay, but says that they were forced into premature engagement by pressure from the troops. Plutarch may well have elaborated this disagreement to highlight Brutus’s selfless reasoning; the Atellius anecdote that he goes on to relate may have led him to infer that Brutus was eager for a quick decision, and to supply the motive himself.
218. *Atellius*: Not otherwise known. He has been speculatively identified with L. Gellius Publicola (*Ant.* 65 and n. 309) – Ziegler suggested reading ‘Gellius’ here – or with an obscure Sex. Atilius Serranus, but neither suggestion is convincing.
219. *Messala*: M. Valerius Messala Corvinus, who later transferred his

allegiance first to Antony and then to Octavian: he was consul with Octavian in 31 and fought at Actium. For his account of these events see Intro.

220. *the same thing ... issue of a single battle*: At Pharsalus Pompey was said to have been forced into battle by the pressure of his over-confident lieutenants (*Caes.* 42, *Pomp.* 68); ‘cast my country’s dice’ also echoes Caesar’s famous words as he crossed the Rubicon (*Caes.* 32). The echoes are the first suggestion that events have turned full circle. According to App. *Civil Wars* 4.124 this ‘Pompey the Great’ remark was made by Brutus, and before the second battle not the first. Possibly Plutarch has moved it to this position to accentuate the differences between Brutus and Cassius (n. 217) or to highlight these full-circle ideas; possibly Appian has moved it to accompany the final climax and to give it to the character of greater dramatic interest. If so, Appian may have retextured his narrative more fully to accommodate the remark (cf. n. 243).
221. *so Messala tells us: Memoirs* fr. 1 P.
222. *Next morning*: The first battle of Philippi was fought in early October 42 BCE.
223. *‘I blamed Cato for taking his own life’*: At Utica in 46 BCE (*Cato* 67–70). The normal Academic attitude to suicide would be one of disapproval (Sedley, *JRS* 87 (1997), 52), and the arguments that Brutus here recalls echo the language of Socrates at Plato *Phaedo* 62a–c. This dialogue with Cassius is discussed by Moles, *Latomus* 42 (1983), 767–71: he leaves the question of its authenticity open, but finds it credible both that the historical Brutus should earlier have criticized Cato’s suicide and that he and Cassius should at this stage have had some sort of suicide pact.
224. *Antony’s soldiers ... digging trenches ... the sea*: More detail at App. *Civil Wars* 4.109.
225. *Octavian ... absent because of sickness*: See n. 213.
226. *in his Memoirs*: See Intro. (this is fr. 12 Malcovati = fr. 7 Smith). *Ant.* 22 also mentions this dream. App. *Civil Wars* 4.110 gives the impression, without quite saying, that it was Octavian’s own dream; Dio 47.41.3 has Athena in a dream direct Octavian’s doctor (i.e. presumably Artorius: next n.) to place him, despite his sickness, in the front line; Vell. 2.70.1, Val. Max. 1.7.1 and Florus 2.17.10 also have the dreaming doctor and also have Octavian fighting in the front line, though there the doctor’s advice seems to be simply to leave the camp and it is Octavian himself who insists on fighting. There are also interesting differences between Plutarch’s two versions, which I discuss in *The Lost Memoirs of Augustus*, ed. Smith and Powell.

227. *one of his friends, Marcus Artorius*: In fact his doctor (cf. previous n.), M. Artorius Asclepiades, a distinguished man.
228. *Antony ... first charge*: In *Ant.* 22 this version is mentioned but rejected, with an implication that it is a slander spread by Antony's enemies (see the paper cited in n. 226). Both *Ant.* and *App. Civil Wars* 4.111 make it clear that Antony was present, and led decisively.
229. *Messala believes: Memoirs* fr. 2 P.
230. *Because of his short sight ...* Other sources stress that the fighting had also caused great clouds of dust.
231. *Titinius*: Other sources say that he was a centurion.
232. *Parthian campaign*: Of 54–53 (n. 42).
233. *drew his cloak over his head*: Just as Caesar had done (ch. 17), and at *Caes.* 69 Plutarch says that Cassius used the same dagger as on the Ides.
234. *last of all the Romans*: Just as Philopoemen was acclaimed by 'a certain Roman' as the last of the Greeks 'for never again – that was the implication – did Greece bear a man who was truly great, and worthy of her past' (*Philopoemen* 1.7): but there the judgement is in retrospect ('never *did* Greece ...') whereas Brutus's judgement is a gloomy forecast. Thus Plutarch can leave it tactfully vague whether Brutus was right to be so resigned.
235. *Messala: Memoirs* fr. 3 P. The same numbers are given by *App. Civil Wars* 4.112.
236. *not to risk a battle*: But *App. Civil Wars* 4.114 says that Brutus *did* lead out his troops and offer battle, and Antony declined. Perhaps Appian represents a Brutus-friendly version (and he later leaves a different impression in 4.119, and so does Dio 47.47); or perhaps Plutarch is accentuating Brutus's change of heart from his previous enthusiasm for battle (ch. 39), which may be equally overstated (n. 217).
237. *Messala Corvinus*: Again this item probably derives from his *Memoirs*.
238. *Publius Casca*: See n. 93, and ch. 17 for his role in the killing.
239. *Thessalonica and Sparta*: Thessalonica had lain on the Caesarians' line of march, so understandably had taken their side; Sparta too had sent forces (ch. 41).
240. *Antony and Octavian ... they had no right*: Cf. *Ant.* 30 and n. 167; *CAH* x2.14–17.
241. *Brutus's fleet ... their ships*: More details, very vivid ones, at *App. Civil Wars* 4.115–16.
242. *the battles ... had been fought on the same day*: So exact a synchronization is suspicious: thus, for instance, the battles of Salamis and Himera were said to have been fought on the same

day in 480 BCE, and Mycale and Plataea on the same day in 479 BCE. But there is no reason to doubt that the dates were close to one another, and the news might well take twenty days to reach Brutus, given that messengers were travelling through territory dominated by the Caesarians.

243. *no news ... reached Brutus's camp*: But App. *Civil Wars* 4.122–4 emphasizes that the news *had* reached Brutus and he was therefore eager to avoid a further battle, but was forced to do so by pressure from his troops and officers – a clear replay of Pompey at Pharsalus (cf. n. 220). The Clodius story that follows here is unlikely to be fabrication, and suggests that Plutarch's account is the more accurate and that it is Appian who has retextured, attaching the Pharsalus echo to the second rather than the first battle (n. 220). Dio 47.47–8 shares elements of both versions: Antony and Octavian were keen to fight before the news reached Brutus; but Brutus was anyway reluctant to fight, and it was internal pressure that forced him to do so.
244. *rule of a single man*: So also *Ant.* 56, 'fate had decreed that everything should come round to Octavian'; *Comp. Dion–Brut.* 2; General Intro. I. Here as in *Antony* the fatalistic colouring heightens the tragic predicament: here Brutus, there Antony, is facing not merely a human adversary but also something more supernatural. The phrasing here, specifying a singular potential 'master of the world', hints at that later development whereby Octavian outstrips not just Brutus but also his current colleague Antony (Intro.).
245. *Clodius*: Not otherwise known.
246. *Publius Volumnius ... campaigns*: *Memoirs* fr. 1 P. This Volumnius may be the same as the 'Volumnius Flaccus' who had brought a message from D. Brutus to the senate in 43 BCE (Cic. *Ad Fam.* 11.12.1: see Shackleton Bailey's n.), but the identification is very uncertain.
247. *oil of roses*: Roses were often associated with death.
248. *at about three o'clock in the afternoon*: On 23 October 42 BCE.
249. *Marcus, the son of Cato ... enemy corpses*: More on this at *Cato* 73.
250. *Lucilius*: Plutarch tells the story again at *Ant.* 69.
251. *ever afterwards a loyal and faithful comrade*: Thus at *Ant.* 69 Lucilius is one of Antony's two trusted confidants after the calamity of Actium: there may be a further hint here at the future turn of the wheel that will make Antony the next in the sequence of victims (cf. nn. 244, 253, 261).
252. *a few officers and friends*: But App. *Civil Wars* 4.131 has Brutus accompanied by 'fewer than four full legions', so that there is a real possibility of renewing the battle the next day with these and

with the troops who had regained the camp. Plutarch is presumably exaggerating to highlight Brutus's pathetic isolation; *Comp. Dion-Brut.* 3 may reflect the version that survives in Appian but which Plutarch here suppresses.

253. *See, Zeus ... these ills:* Euripides *Medea* 334, where Medea is cursing her faithless husband Jason. The singular – ‘who is the author’ – might suggest that one man rather than two is responsible: but which? App. *Civil Wars* 4.130 thinks that Brutus meant Antony; if so, this may be another hint of Antony as the next victim (cf. nn. 244, 251, 261 and *Comp. Dion-Brut.* n. 20), as if a curse of Brutus was coming true. But maybe Brutus meant Octavian (so Moles, *Latomus* 42 (1983), 772–3), with whom he was on worse terms than with Antony (this is what made Lucilius's request to be taken to Antony rather than Octavian so plausible, ch. 50); or, most interestingly of all, perhaps Caesar's ghost, rather as in the final cry of Shakespeare's Brutus: ‘Caesar, now be still ...’ (*Julius Caesar*, V.5.50).
254. *Volumnius ... has forgotten: Memoirs* fr. 2 P. What was this ‘other line’? Dio 47.49.2 and Florus 2.17.11 record Brutus as delivering the tragic lines ‘Virtue, you wretch! So you were just a word, and I followed you as if you were real; in fact you were just fortune's slave’. Plutarch knew the lines (*On Superstition* 165a, disapprovingly), which is not to say that he knew that Brutus had exclaimed them; but, if he did, he might naturally suppress them as out of keeping with the rest of Brutus's terminal behaviour. The issue is discussed by Moles, *Latomus* 42 (1983), 775–9, who argues that the lines were fraudulently attributed to Brutus by an unsympathetic Caesarian source.
255. *Labeo*: Ch. 12 with n. 78.
256. *Flavius ... chief of engineers*: i.e. his *praefectus fabrum*: he may well be the ‘Flavius’ mentioned at Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.6.4 and 1.17.3; he is less likely to be the C. Flavius Hemic(illus?) who issued coins for Brutus as *legatus pro praetore* (MRR ii.353, 367, MRR iii.91).
257. *Volumnius*: This item too probably comes from Volumnius's own work (Intro.).
258. *Statilius*: Ch. 12 and n. 74.
259. *Volumnius*: He again is likely to be the source.
260. *Strato*: From Epirus, according to App. *Civil Wars* 4.131. Cf. the stories of Antony's reluctant friends, *Ant.* 76.
261. *Messala*: Ch. 40 and n. 219 and Intro. The reference to Messala here suggests, and may be meant as an indication, that he is the source for this paragraph. The foreglances to Actium again suggest the cycle in which Antony looms as Octavian's next victim (nn. 244, 251, 253).

262. *Antony ... had the thief put to death*: Also told at *Ant.* 22, where Plutarch makes it clear that the robe should have been burned with Brutus's body.
263. *The ashes he sent home to Servilia*: But there was another tradition that Brutus's head was sent back to Rome but then thrown into the sea during a storm (Dio 47.49.2, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 13.1). If Plutarch knew this, he would naturally suppress a story so out of keeping with the terminal dignity and respect that his narrative stresses.
264. *Nicolaus the philosopher*: I.e. Nicolaus of Damascus: this is *FGrH* 90 F 99. On 'the philosopher' see n. 267; the phrase also echoes ch. 1, where Posidonius 'the philosopher' gives critical evidence on Brutus's earlier family (n. 12), and thus it contributes to the sense of closure.
265. *Valerius Maximus*: At 4.6.5. He too indicates that she was prevented from killing herself in a more normal way ('because steel was being withheld'). App. *Civil Wars* 4.136 and Dio 47.49.3 agree that Porcia's death followed upon news of Brutus's own suicide, and this became canonical (Martial 1.42). But Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.9 makes it clear that the death was earlier, perhaps in midsummer 43 BCE (see Shackleton Bailey's n.). Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.17.7, if genuine (it probably is), mentions Porcia's illness and the concern it was causing in mid 43.
266. *a letter from Brutus to his friends*: Not extant, but it may well have been genuine: notice though Plutarch's careful marker of scholarly doubt ('if it is really one of the genuine ones'), ending the *Life* on a note suggesting the difficulty of pinning down even such famous events as these.
267. *Nicolaus is mistaken in the date of her death*: Why just Nicolaus and not Valerius too? Perhaps because Nicolaus was the earlier writer, perhaps because being 'the philosopher' would normally have been expected to add to his credibility.

Notes to the Comparison of Dion and Brutus

1. *the slughtness ... starting-points*: Echoing *Dion* 50, 'we may imagine what joy and pride the Syracusans must then have felt at having overthrown with the most meagre resources the greatest tyranny that had ever been established'.
2. *they had been sentenced to death*: *Brut.* 27. The point here is overstated, as Plutarch strains to favour Dion in the first half of the *Comparison*. The narrative of *Brutus* made it clear that Brutus and Cassius turned to war some time before this death-sentence; the rest of the *Life* too has given the impression of much less self-

interest and commitment to the common cause than Plutarch here suggests, and that is the emphasis to which he reverts in the second half of the *Comparison*.

3. *it seemed no more than a name ... tyrannical*: Another impression that was not made clear in the narrative itself (Intro. *Brut.*).
4. *gentlest ... doctor*: Cf. *Caes.* 28, where in the late fifties BCE people are despairing of the health of the Roman state and think of Pompey, not Caesar, as the gentlest doctor; *Ant.* 6 gives a similarly favourable view of Caesar's actions in power.
5. *the decision to let Dionysius leave Syracuse*: Dionysius leaves at *Dion* 37, though it is hardly there a 'decision': Dionysius simply escapes. *Dion* 32 explains why Dion might be suspected of 'sparing the tyrant'.
6. *not to destroy the tomb of the earlier tyrant*: *Dion* 53.
7. *ill advised ... decisive campaign*: Another new idea; nor does Plutarch here give any clear notion of what alternative Brutus might have had.
8. *even less daring than Pompey ... fortune*: This picks up the comparison with Pharsalus (*Brut.* 40), but seems to align with the emphasis of Appian, tying that comparison to the second battle, rather than his own comparison with the first (*Brut.* nn. 220, 242).
9. *the military situation ... reason for hope*: This again seems to align with the version of Appian (*Brut.* n. 252) more than the emphasis Plutarch gave himself in ch. 51.
10. *his fleet firmly dominated the entire sea*: *Brut.* 47.
11. *had been saved ... as he wanted*: *Brut.* 6 and n. 39.
12. *had been wronged as a husband*: *Dion* 21.
13. *had lost his possessions*: *Dion* 19.
14. *that is made clear in Plato's letters*: Especially the narrative in the *Seventh Letter*: notice 350d–e, 'If Dionysius had given Dion back his possessions or even been wholly reconciled with him, none of this would ever have happened.'
15. *to become the friend of his enemy Pompey*: *Brut.* 4 and n. 33.
16. *not even Dion's friends ... softer name than 'tyrant'*: Again a different emphasis from the narrative: *Dion* 32 stresses how unfair and unreasonable were these suspicions. The language echoes *Brut.* 29, but there the contrast is with what Pompey would have done at Rome ('pacify the people by adopting the style of consul or dictator or some other more acceptable title of authority'), not with Dion at Syracuse: that point is fairer.
17. *even his enemies ... restoration of the Roman Republic*: Echoing *Brut.* 29 (n. 186), where the remark is attributed to Antony.
18. *the simple appearance ... against Dionysius*: *Dion* 26–7.

19. *its holder*: I.e. Octavian (*Brut.* n. 132).
20. *and his name ... power of Antony*: As in the closing sections of the narrative itself (nn. 244, 251, 253, 261), there are several hints in the last two chapters of the *Comparison* of the next phase in the fighting, with Antony as Octavian's next opponent.
21. *Dion either chose badly ... turn good people into bad*: In fact Dion's friends do not come out at all badly in most of the narrative (e.g. in their advice on Heraclides, *Dion* 47), but very poorly at the end: Dion's friend Callippus, 'the detestable creature' (ch. 54), manages to mobilize others to assist in his plot, and the friends that are with Dion then do little to help (ch. 57); then Hicetas murders the surviving women (ch. 58).
22. *Plato too finds fault with him ... destroyed him*: *Seventh Letter* 333d–4a.
23. *Octavian*: By now 'Augustus', but 'Octavian' is kept in the translation here for clarity. The Greek, as usual, has simply 'Caesar' (*Brut.* n. 132).
24. *Octavian's face broken into a smile ... where it was*: Cf. the story at *Cic.* 49 of Augustus expressing respect for Cicero when he caught a nephew reading one of his books. On the effect of this closing cadence, see Intro. *Brut.*

ANTONY

Further Reading

Many of the themes discussed in this introduction and in my notes are treated more fully in my commentary on the Greek text, *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (1988), cited below as 'Pelling, *LA*'. The introduction to that commentary was written in such a way as to be accessible to readers without any knowledge of Greek. I also wrote the chapter on 'The Triumviral Period' in the revised edition of vol. x of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (1996). Josiah Osgood's *Caesar's Legacy* (2006) now gives a beautifully written and incisive narrative of the period. Ronald Syme's *The Roman Revolution* (1939) remains a classic. Modern biographies of Antony include E. G. Huzar's *Marcus Antonius: A Biography* (1978). Not surprisingly, there are rather more of Cleopatra, most recently S. M. Burstein's *Reign of Cleopatra* (2007) and S.-A. Ashton's *Cleopatra and Egypt* (2008). Mary Hamer's *Signs of Cleopatra* (1993) and Lucy Hughes-Hallett's *Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions* (1990) are both extremely illuminating on the many twists and turns the legend of Cleopatra has taken since antiquity; that is also the theme of S. Walker and P. Higgs (eds.), *Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth* (2001). This volume was originally written to accompany a British Museum exhibition, and is particularly well illustrated.

Notes to the Introduction to Antony

1. This remark of Plato also seems to underlie *Cor.* 1, where Coriolanus's career 'bears witness to the truth of the view that a naturally generous and noble disposition, if it lacks discipline, will produce both good and evil fruits at once, in the same way as a naturally fertile soil, if it does not receive the proper tilling'. The reference is probably to Plato *Republic* 491b–2a, though Plato says similar things on several occasions (*Crito* 44d, *Hippias Minor* 375e, *Gorgias* 525e). Duff has recently argued that this doctrine of 'great natures' is fundamental to a good deal of Plutarch's thinking (*Plutarch's Lives*, esp. pp. 47–9, 60–65, 205–8, 224–8, and, with a detailed discussion of the *Demetrius* proem, *Hermes* 132 (2004), 271–91).
2. See respectively *Comp. Agis–Cleom.–Gracch.* 2; *Sert.* 10; *Luc.* 39–41; *Phoc.* 3 (quoted in *Intro. Cato*) and *Cato* 30; *Brut.* 46.
3. Cf. in particular *Demetr.* 35; also chs. 5, 19, 25, 28, 31, 32, 37–8, 41, 45, 47–52.

4. Chs. 2 and nn. 7 and 9, 9 and n. 58, 10 and nn. 62–3 and 65, 11 and n. 70, 12 and n. 72, 13 and n. 79, 15 and nn. 88 and 90, 21 and nn. 124–5 and 127.
5. Cf. General Intro. III.
6. On *Brutus* see Intro. *Brut.*
7. ‘Doing the numbers: the mathematics of civil war in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*’ in *Citizens of Discord: Rome and its Civil Wars*, ed. C. Damon, A. Rossi and B. Breed (2010).

Notes to Antony

1. *Antonius the orator*: M. Antonius, the consul of 99 BCE. He was initially a friend of Marius, then turned against him: for his death, see *Mar.* 44.
2. *his father ... surname Creticus*: Praetor in 74 BCE, he was then given a command against the Cretan pirates (*Luc.* 2 and n. 16), was disastrously defeated in 72 or 71 and died soon afterwards (*MRR* ii.117, 123). The cognomen ‘Creticus’ may have been given to gloss over the failure.
3. *his generosity*: Like father, like son (cf. ch. 4).
4. *his wife Julia*: Daughter of L. Caesar, the consul of 90 BCE, and sister of L. Caesar, the consul of 64. She protects her brother in ch. 20 and is mentioned again in ch. 32.
5. *Cornelius Lentulus*: P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, consul in 71 BCE, then expelled from the senate; praetor for the second time in 63 at the time of the conspiracy. For his (alleged) role in that see *Cic.* 17–22.
6. *Antony says*: The present tense marks a quotation (cf. ch. 10 and n. 63), presumably from one of Antony’s speeches.
7. *friend of Curio ... blight upon his career*: This is C. Scribonius Curio (*Cato* 46 and n. 244), who was to play an important role as tribune in 50 BCE (ch. 5). Most of this material on Curio is drawn from *Cic. Phil.* 2.44–8, but reshaped to make Curio more of a corrupting influence than simply, as in Cicero, a partner in the excesses (Intro.).
8. *250 talents*: One talent = 6,000 drachmas/denarii = 24,000 sesterces (*Ti. Gracch.* 2 and n. 12), so this corresponds to Cicero’s figure of 6 million sesterces (*Phil.* 2.45).
9. *attached himself ... to Clodius*: During Clodius’s tribunate of 58 BCE, according to *Cic. Phil.* 2.48.
10. *Asiatic style*: The contrast of sober ‘Attic’ and florid ‘Asiatic’ styles of oratory was in fashion at the time, and Cicero defended himself against ‘Asiatic’ criticisms in *Orator* (esp. 22–32) and *Brutus*. ‘Asiatic’ however is better seen as a derogatory slogan

than as an established school.

11. *Gabinus, a man of consular rank: Cato* 33 and n. 179. This campaign was in 57–55 (*MRR* ii.203, 210–11). It is discussed by M. Siani-Davies, *Historia* 46 (1997), 323–38.
12. *Aristobulus*: King and high priest of Judaea since 69 or 67. After a period of activity in Rome he returned to Judaea in 57 and fomented this revolt. Plutarch has simplified its course and exaggerated Antony's role, but other sources confirm his gallantry.
13. *Ptolemy Auletes*: Cleopatra's father. The Alexandrians had expelled him in 58 BCE and replaced him with his daughter Berenice (*Cato* 35 and n. 188).
14. *Pelusium*: See Map 4.
15. *the Channel and the Serbonian marshes*: The modern Sabkhat el-Bardawil, the salt-lake stretching east of Port Said; the Channel was a dried-up watercourse connecting the lake to the sea.
16. *Archelaus*: His father Archelaus had been a general of Mithridates. This Archelaus had joined Gabinus in 56 BCE, but left him to marry Berenice and be crowned king of Egypt.
17. *sought out his body ... royal honours*: This prefigures his treatment of the dead Brutus (ch, 22).
18. *an ancient tradition ... one of the sons of Hercules*: Thus an Antonian supporter issued coins portraying Hercules or Anton (Crawford, *RRC* nr. 494/2a–b), as Caesar and Octavian had their types of Venus and Aeneas. For the importance of such claims in Roman politics see T. P. Wiseman, 'Legendary genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *G&R* 21 (1974), 153–64.
19. *a decies*: I.e. one million sesterces = 250,000 drachmas/denarii. Antony is his father's son (ch. 1), just as his own son Antyllus will show the same qualities (ch. 28), and so may his descendant Nero (ch. 87).
20. *At the time of which I am now speaking*: The narrative now jumps to the events preceding the outbreak of war in January 49 BCE. Plutarch passes over Antony's service with Caesar in Gaul (54–50) and his quaestorship (51): *MRR* iii.19–20. For fuller accounts of the political background to the war see *Caes.* 28–9, *Pomp.* 56–8 and *Cato* 48–51.
21. *Curio ... now one of Caesar's supporters*: He had been elected as tribune for 50 BCE as an opponent of Caesar; since coming over to Caesar's side in February that year he had been prominent and effective in his support (*Caes.* 30, *Pomp.* 58).
22. *Antony's election ... as augur*: In late July/early August 50 BCE. Antony's term as tribune began later, on 10 December 50.
23. *Marcellus*: C. Claudius Marcellus, the consul of 50 BCE (*MRR*

ii.247) and first husband of Octavia (chs. 31, 87 and nn. 172, 386).

24. *the forces ... raised*: The two legions that had been serving under Caesar in Gaul (n. 240 to *Cato* 45).
25. *introducing a decree*: Plutarch seems to mean 'issuing a tribunician edict', but may have misunderstood (n. in Pelling, *LA*).
26. *Bibulus*: M. Calpurnius Bibulus (*Cato* 25 and n. 116), now proconsul of Syria (*MRR* ii.242, 250).
27. *campaign against the Parthians*: Parthia had been threatening the eastern provinces since 53 BCE, and there had been an invasion of Syria in 51. The threat had now lessened, and these legions never left Italy.
28. *Antony ... read them aloud himself*: Possibly on 21 December 50 BCE. The letter proposed that both Pompey and Caesar give up their armies (*Pomp.* 59).
29. *only a small minority ... Caesar should do so*: *Caes.* 30 shows that Plutarch refers to the debate of 1 January 49 BCE, but this detail of the two votes seems borrowed from the debate of 1 December 50, before Antony's tribunate began. It was then Curio who proposed the simultaneous disarmament of both, and secured a 370 to 22 majority in its favour. Plutarch has probably fused details of the two sessions together, though it is also possible that the debates followed a closely similar course.
30. *Antony ... dismiss their troops*: Which is what Caesar had himself suggested (n. 28) and Curio had been proposing since May (previous n. and *Cato* n. 264). Plutarch here leaves the impression that it was Antony's own idea.
31. *a fresh set of proposals*: A few days later (5/6 January). The proposal was that Caesar should give up Transalpine Gaul and eight legions and retain only Illyricum, Cisalpine Gaul and two legions, until he could become consul (presumably in 48 BCE). Cicero persuaded the Caesarians to reduce their demands to Illyricum and a single legion.
32. *Lentulus ... Antony ejected from the senate*: 7 January 48 BCE. This is L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus, consul in 49 (*MRR* ii.256). The central legal issue is the overriding of the tribunicial veto, and Plutarch seems either not to have understood this (as at *Ti. Gracch.* 10 and *Cato* 20: General Intro. IV) or to be simplifying for his audience.
33. *Quintus Cassius*: Q. Cassius Longinus, one of Antony's fellow-tribunes (*MRR* ii.259).
34. *Caesar then invaded Italy with his army*: In fact Caesar apparently crossed the Rubicon (night of 10 January 49 BCE) *before* meeting Antony and Cassius, who joined him at Ariminum.

35. *Cicero in his Philippics ... just as Helen had been of the Trojan war:* The analogy with Helen is drawn from Cic. *Phil.* 2.55. Plutarch knows the passage at first hand (Intro. and General Intro. III).
36. *planned such an action long before:* Elsewhere too Plutarch stresses that Caesar had a long-term calculated plan to achieve monarchy (esp. *Caes.* 28, 69, *Pomp.* 51). Modern critics normally disagree, seeing Caesar as reacting to events without any clear-cut ambition for one-man rule. The issue was clearly a matter for contemporary debate (cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.82–3 and Suet. *Iul.* 30).
37. *Alexander ... Cyrus long ago:* Plutarch pairs Caesar with Alexander, and the comparison was a traditional one; Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BCE) was the founder of the Achaemenid empire.
38. *Caesar advanced upon Rome, captured it ... Italy:* More detail at *Pomp.* 60–63, *Caes.* 33–6.
39. *Lepidus, who was praetor: MRR ii.257:* this is the future triumvir.
40. *one of the tribunes of the people:* Antony in fact exercised this command as propraeor (*MRR* ii.260).
41. *Caesar's regime ... made unpopular by his friends:* Plutarch elaborates this theme at *Caes.* 51. A similarly favourable view of Caesar's regime is given in *Comp. Dion-Brut.* 2, though not in the narrative of *Brutus* (see n. 4 to *Comp. Dion-Brut.* 2).
42. *Caesar returned from Spain:* Early December 49 BCE. He left for Brundisium eleven days later (*Caes.* 37).
43. *Gabinus:* See ch. 3 and n. 11 and, for this command (probably as legate), *MRR* ii.281.
44. *Caesar himself now sailed from Brundisium ... Macedonia:* Caesar crossed on 4 January 48 BCE, and immediately sent back his ships: they were attacked on the return voyage, then blockaded in Brundisium. Antony could not break out till spring. It was an anxious time: *Caes.* 38 tells of Caesar's unsuccessful attempt to sail back to Italy in a small boat.
45. *Libo:* L. Scribonius Libo, future consul of 34 BCE, currently legate of Pompey (*MRR* ii.282). He had recently defeated Antony's brother C. Antonius (ch. 22 and n. 134) in a naval battle off the Dalmatian coast. On the present engagement see *Caes. BC* 3.24–8, which will be Plutarch's ultimate source.
46. *many of their ships ... destroyed:* All sixteen, according to *Caes. BC* 3.27.
47. *Lissus:* Modern Lezhë, about 60 km north of Dyrrhachium.
48. *Twice ... won a victory:* Both were during the Dyrrhachium campaign (*Caes. BC* 3.46, 65). Plutarch describes the summer's fighting more fully at *Caes.* 39–46 and *Pomp.* 65–72.
49. *Pharsalus:* 9 August 48 BCE. Antony commanded of the left wing (cf. *Caes. BC* 3.89). The battle was decided on the right.

50. *when Caesar was proclaimed dictator*: This was done when the news of Caesar's victory reached Rome (presumably late August or early September 48 BCE).
51. *sent him to Rome*: Antony arrived in Italy in October/November 48 BCE.
52. *once a dictator ... suspended*: A mistake, it seems, one shared with other Greek writers (including Polybius 3.87.8): all the regular offices continued under a dictatorship. Still, in 47 BCE no magistrates except tribunes were elected before Caesar returned, and so Antony was as powerful as Plutarch says.
53. *Dolabella*: P. Cornelius Dolabella, Cicero's son-in-law (*Brut.* 8 and 25, and nn. 56, 156 there). He was probably in his early thirties (so not that 'young' a man), and was now tribune in 47 (*MRR* ii.287); later he was consul in 44 BCE.
54. *cancellation of debts*: Also a remission of house-rents, both measures continuing a programme started the year before by M. Caelius Rufus (*MRR* ii.273).
55. *Asinius ... Trebellius*: This is Asinius Pollio, the historian (General Intro. III), who doubtless included an account of these events. L. Trebellius Fides was tribune in 47 BCE, along with Dolabella, and perhaps Pollio was too (*MRR* ii.287).
56. *drove his wife out of his house*: Divorce was not difficult, at least for a man (S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage* (1991), ch. 13). This marriage to Antonia may have been Antony's second, for Cicero alleges that a 'Fadia' bore him children (*Cic. Phil.* 2.3, *Att.* 16.11.1); but if there is any truth in it at all that may just have been a careless affair.
57. *Gaius Antonius ... consulship*: Plutarch mentions C. Antonius Hybrida at *Cic.* 11–12 and 16, but his role in the events of 63 BCE was more ambiguous than Plutarch there indicates (*MRR* ii.166).
58. *as Cicero explains*: The rest of the chapter takes and remoulds material from various passages in *Cic. Phil.* 2, with some exaggeration and elaboration, e.g. the friend holding out the toga, the gold drinking cups and the lavish picnics: these are probably Plutarch's own imaginative additions. A more positive picture of Antony's actions at this time is given by J. Ramsey, *CQ* 54 (2004), 161–73: he suggests that Antony was given the delicate task of disposing of Pompey's immense confiscated property.
59. *Cytheris*: The stage-name of the actress Volumnia. She may be the woman to whom, as 'Lycoris', the poet Cornelius Gallus addressed his elegies. The material on both Sergius and Cytheris is drawn from *Cic. Phil.* 2 (58 and 62).
60. *sambuca-players*: The sambuca was a sort of lyre with four strings, often played by disreputable girls (cf. Athenaeus 129a: 'I thought

they were naked, but some of the other guests said they were wearing something’).

61. *elected consul for the third time*: For 46 BCE (MRR ii.293). Later that year Caesar was also proclaimed dictator again, with Lepidus as master of horse (ch. 8 and nn. 50, 52).
62. *Pompey’s house ... became angry*: Plutarch’s source was Cic. *Phil.* 2.64, 71–2.
63. *Antony ... Caesar’s African campaign*: This is the campaign that was decided by Caesar’s victory at Thapsus in April 46 BCE (*Cato* 56–72). As at ch. 2 (n. 6), the present tense ‘makes out’ indicates a quotation, but Plutarch was probably misled here by a passage at *Phil.* 2.72 where Cicero, doubtless misleadingly, puts some words in Antony’s mouth.
64. *Fulvia*: After Clodius’s death in 52 BCE she had also been married to Curio (ch. 2 and n. 7). Here and later (chs. 28, 30) Plutarch presents her as energetic and dominating; other sources stress her greed and cruelty. Her role in Antony’s career is discussed by K. Welch, *G&R* 42 (1995), 182–201.
65. *disguised ... his face all muffled*: Mainly drawn from Cic. *Phil.* 2.76–8, with as usual some elaboration (‘the rumour ... that Caesar had been killed’ and ‘before taking the letter’). Plutarch misdates: the incident did not take place as Caesar was returning from Spain (ch. 11 and next n., summer–autumn 45 BCE) but before, in March 45, when Antony was on his way to Spain but turned back at Narbo and returned to Rome.
66. *When Caesar returned from Spain*: This was after his victory at Munda (*Caes.* 56), March 45 BCE. He was back in North Italy by July, but did not return to Rome until October. Antony journeyed as far as Narbo to meet him (ch. 13).
67. *Brutus Albinus*: I.e. D. Iunius Brutus Albinus (*Brut.* 12 and n. 79).
68. *Octavian ... nephew*: In fact great-nephew, son of Caesar’s niece Atia. Plutarch gets it right at *Brut.* 22 (n. 134 there), and the text here may be corrupt – but Plutarch may well just have made a mistake.
69. *when Caesar ... consul for the fifth time*: For 44 BCE (MRR ii.315). He also continued as dictator, with Lepidus as master of horse (ch. 10 and n. 61).
70. *Antony violently opposed ... Dolabella*: Largely drawn from Cic. *Phil.* 2.79–84, with some elaboration. All this took place in early 44 BCE, first in the senate on 1 January and then in the electoral assembly. Caesar did not in fact ‘give up the attempt’: it seems that the election was carried through, though its validity remained in doubt.
71. *not these fat, long-haired types ... lean ones*: So also *Brut.* 8 with n.

57. This story, together with Dolabella's uncompromising behaviour, is probably Plutarch's only reason for inferring Caesar's 'disgust' with him.
72. *Lupercalia*: The festival, often connected with Romulus, took place on 15 February. Plutarch again draws much of his material from the *Second Philippic* (84–7). This incident is much discussed (most recently by J. A. North, *JRS* 98 (2008), 144–60). Plutarch gives the impression (more clearly here than at *Caes.* 60–61) that Antony was acting off his own initiative, but it is more likely that Caesar had preconcerted the attempt, either to test the waters for kingship or to signify his refusal to accept it. If the latter, it clearly misfired.
73. *dressed in a triumphal robe*: Probably a simplification: Caesar had been granted the right not merely to triumphal dress but to 'the dress the kings once wore', and it seems to have been this 'regal' robe (purple and unembroidered) that he was wearing.
74. *diadem*: The simple headband that was a symbol of royalty (*Ti. Gracch.* 14 and n. 64).
75. *pulled open his toga ... there and then*: This is displaced, it seems, from an earlier incident, after Caesar had caused offence by failing to rise before the approaching magistrates and senate (*Caes.* 60). Cf. next n.
76. *The wreath ... deposed from their office*: A further displacement: this is borrowed from an incident a few weeks earlier, when Caesar's statues were found decorated with laurel wreath and diadem. The tribunes C. Epidius Marullus and L. Caesetius Flavius removed the diadem and imprisoned the culprit; Caesar deposed the tribunes, and they fled from Rome. *Caes.* 61 more clearly separates this incident from the Lupercalia, though he mis-states the sequence.
77. *This episode encouraged Brutus and Cassius*: The conspiracy is narrated more fully in *Brut.* 10–18 (see nn. there).
78. *Trebonius*: C. Trebonius, tribune in 55 and consul in 45 (*Brut.* 17 with n. 99, the same story as here).
79. *Trebonius ... kept it secret*: This tale of Trebonius's sounding of Antony is drawn from *Cic. Phil.* 2.34, placing it in Narbo; Plutarch adds some detail (the shared tent – incorrectly, cf. *Ti. Gracch.* 4 and n. 23), and reasonably infers that Antony did not reveal the plot to Caesar (see General Intro. III). But neither Cicero nor any other source confirms that the conspirators considered recruiting Antony now (not very plausible after the scene at the Lupercalia), nor that Trebonius reported the earlier conversation to his colleagues.
80. *Brutus objected to this ... taint of injustice*: *Brut.* 18 and n. 107.

81. *some of the conspirators were detailed to keep watch for him:* At *Brut.* 17 Plutarch correctly names Trebonius himself as the one who distracted Antony; at *Caes.* 66 he says it was D. Brutus. The imprecision here may be a fudge, if Plutarch was conscious of the inconsistency between his other two versions.
82. *Caesar fell in the senate-house:* 15 March 44 BCE.
83. *sent them his son as a hostage:* I.e. Antyllus (ch. 28 and n. 164): he was not more than two years' old. Lepidus's rather older son also went as hostage. This in fact happened a little later, following the senate-meeting on 17 March 44 BCE.
84. *a meeting of the senate ... provinces ... to Brutus and Cassius and their supporters:* On 17 March 44 BCE (*Brut.* 19 and n. 117).
85. *Antony delivered the customary eulogy over it in the forum:* Probably on 20 March 44 BCE (*Brut.* 20 and n. 121). In *Brutus* Plutarch stresses that it had been Brutus who had, against Cassius's advice, agreed to Antony's request that Caesar's will should be read and that he should be buried publicly: nothing of that here. It would have made Antony's behaviour seem more calculated; here his inflammatory speech seems more of a spontaneous response to the public mood.
86. *burned Caesar's body in the forum:* *Brut.* 20 and nn. 122–3.
87. *Brutus and his followers left the city:* In fact the leaders remained in Rome till early–mid April 44 BCE (*Brut.* 21 and n. 126).
88. *4,000 talents:* 96 million sesterces (n. 8), presumably a rounding of 100 million, the figure given at *Cic.* 43. It is doubtful whether Antony did in fact take any large sums of coined money, though he did remove some expensive art-works. Plutarch may be confusing or conflating this with some alleged embezzlements from the Temple of Ops (cf. n. 127), a theme that figures large in Cicero's *Second Philippic*.
89. *Antony ... decrees:* On the night of 15 or (less likely) 16 March 44 BCE.
90. *Antony made a number of insertions ... the will of Caesar:* Another favoured theme of Cicero in the *Second Philippic* (§§ 93–100). But J. Ramsey (CQ 44 (1994), 130–46) argues that Antony was initially very moderate and conciliatory in his use of these documents.
91. *'the Charonites':* Charon was the ferryman of the dead.
92. *Gaius ... Lucius as tribune:* MRR ii.319, 323. For Gaius cf. ch. 22 and n. 134; for Lucius, ch. 30 and n. 167.
93. *Octavian:* On the name see *Brut.* n. 132. He arrived in Italy in early April 44 BCE and apparently spent a few days in Rome before retreating to Campania; he returned to Rome in early May. His movements are discussed by M. Toher, CQ 54 (2004), 174–84.

94. *as I have mentioned above*: Ch. 11 and n. 68.
95. *heir to the dead man's property*: In fact to three-quarters of it. Octavian also had been adopted in the will as Caesar's son, and this gave him Caesar's name: Plutarch stresses the immense political advantages of this at *Comp. Dion-Brut.* 4, but fails to mention it here.
96. *Apollonia*: Modern Valona, on the Adriatic shore of Albania.
97. *He at once paid his respects ... 75 drachmas*: This interview took place in late May 44 BCE. Caesar had left 300 sesterces (= 75 drachmas/denarii) to 'every Roman', i.e. (probably) those entitled to free corn-distributions, 150,000 in number. When Antony refused to pay it, Octavian sold property and paid it on his own account, and seems also to have increased the number of recipients: at *Res Gestae* 15.1 he says that at least 250,000 received it.
98. *when Octavian stood ... as tribune*: An obscure episode: if historical, it was in June/July 44 BCE.
99. *dedicate a golden chair ... decreed*: Before his death Caesar had been voted the honour of an empty throne in the theatre with a golden crown. Octavian tried unsuccessfully twice to display the crown and throne, in May and July 44 BCE.
100. *Octavian's next move ... the two men were reconciled*: The chronology is here confused. Cicero only began to campaign for Octavian in December 44 BCE; the mobilizing of veterans belongs in October and November; but the reconciliation on the Capitol was earlier, in late July/early August.
101. *a report ... Octavian was plotting against his life*: Early October 44 BCE. This may well have been a propaganda ploy of Antony himself.
102. *offering lavish pay ... veterans*: Both men offered 500 denarii to each recruit, and much bigger sums if they won, Octavian as much as 5,000 denarii (cf. ch. 23 for the repeat of this offer in 42 BCE). See *Galb.* 2 and n. 15 for the escalation of such rewards under the principate.
103. *Cicero ... against Antony*: The feud of Cicero and Antony intensified in autumn 44 BCE: by December Cicero had probably published the *Second Philippic*, and he began to campaign for Octavian in the senate on 20 December. Plutarch gives more details at *Cic.* 45.
104. *to declare him a public enemy*: In fact the senate did this only after Antony's defeat (26 April 43 BCE).
105. *Hirtius and Pansa*: A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus, consuls for 43 BCE (*MRR* ii.334–6).
106. *Mutina*: Modern Modena. In the first of two battles (Forum

Gallorum, 14 April 43 BCE) Antony attacked Pansa with some success, but was defeated by Hirtius's relieving troops; a week later he was defeated again. Hirtius died in the second battle, Pansa from wounds received in the first.

107. *in their retreat*: Westwards, beginning on 22 April 43 BCE, aiming to meet up with Lepidus in Gaul.
108. *during the crossing of the Alps*: The hardest climb was in fact across the Appennines south of Dertona, and Antony's route after that lay along the coast. But, since Hannibal, crossings of the Alps had particularly engaged the imagination, and Antony himself used the phrase (D. Brutus in Cic. *Ad Fam.* 11.13.3).
109. *Lepidus*: The future triumvir was governor of Narbonese Gaul and Nearer Spain (MRR ii.341–2). The two armies met at Forum Voconii, 40 km west of Forum Iulii (Fréjus), on about 18 May. They united on 29 May 43 BCE.
110. *beard ... left to grow long after his defeat*: Antony had begun to wear a short beard in mourning after Caesar's death: he abandoned it after Philippi.
111. *Munatius Plancus*: L. Munatius Plancus, who was to be consul in 42 BCE (*Brut.* 19 and n. 114). He did Antony good service until his desertion in 32 (ch. 58).
112. *Varius ... 'Half-pint'*: L. Varius Cotylo (or Cotyla): *kotyle* was a Greek liquid measure.
113. *who ... was attached to liberty*: Plutarch does not conceal Octavian's lack of sympathy for 'liberty'; yet on coins of 28–27 BCE Octavian claimed to be 'the champion of the Roman people's liberty' and to 'have restored to the Roman people its laws and rights' (V. Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (2nd edn, 1976), nr. 18; J. W. Rich and J. H. C. Williams, *Numismatic Chronicle* 159 (1999), 169–213). He later began the monumental record of his achievements in the *Res Gestae* by representing himself as championing liberty in the Mutina campaign. By Plutarch's time the principate was so established that there was no shame in admitting Octavian's ambition for universal rule (General Intro. I).
114. *the three*: I.e. Antony, Octavian and Lepidus. This is confusing, for several others have been named since Lepidus's last mention, but Plutarch assumes a familiarity with the 'triumvirate'. This famous meeting took place near Bononia (Bologna) in late October or early November 43 BCE: it was agreed that the three would hold power for five years as *tresuiri rei publicae constituendae*. Antony was to hold Cisalpine and Farther Gaul, Lepidus Narbonese Gaul and Nearer and Farther Spain, and Octavian Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.

115. *Octavian sacrificed Antony to Cicero*: At *Cic.* 46 Plutarch says, not very plausibly, that Octavian tried for two days to save Cicero.
116. *Lucius Caesar ... uncle on his mother's side*: The consul of 64 BCE (ch. 2 and n. 4).
117. *Paullus*: L. Aemilius Paullus, consul in 50 BCE; he came over to support Caesar in the final stages before the war, allegedly for a vast bribe (*Caes.* 29). Both L. Caesar (ch. 20) and Paullus in fact survived these proscriptions.
118. *some say ... demanded his death*: That is the version given at *Cic.* 46. Since writing that Life, Plutarch had presumably learnt better (Intro. III).
119. *daughter of Antony's wife Fulvia*: By her first husband Clodius: ch. 10 and n. 64. Clodia cannot have been much older than ten; the marriage was never consummated, and it ended in 41 BCE when relations between Octavian and Fulvia soured (ch. 30; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 62).
120. *three hundred men*: *Brut.* 27 and, on the number, n. 176 there.
121. *after he had been slaughtered*: 7 December 43 BCE (*Cic.* 47).
122. *with his sister*: I.e. Julia, Antony's mother (n. 4).
123. *Antony ... greatest share of the blame*: It became conventional to blame Antony, but Suet. *Aug.* 27 suggests a different picture: Octavian 'resisted his colleague for a time and pressed for there to be no proscriptions, but once they were begun he carried them out more ruthlessly than either of them'.
124. *plunged ... debauchery*: No other source suggests that Antony's excesses were particularly notable at this point, but Plutarch collects together material here, largely drawn from the *Second Philippic*, to review his faults in preparation for the entry of Cleopatra.
125. *the house ... Pompey the Great*: Drawn from *Cic. Phil.* 2.66–9 (cf. ch. 10 and n. 62), but Cicero – of course, dead by now (chs. 19–20) – was referring to events a few years earlier.
126. *three triumphs*: Each from a different continent, Africa, Europe and Asia (*Pomp.* 14, 22, and esp. 45). Cf. *Luc.* 36 and n. 195.
127. *squandered most of the money ... victims*: In the *Second Philippic* Cicero had claimed that Antony was spending state money on his own debauches, but that referred to the alleged embezzlement from the Temple of Ops (n. 88) in 44 BCE. The money raised from the proscriptions was, it seems, used to support the campaign against Brutus and Cassius.
128. *led their combined forces ... to attack Brutus and Cassius*: Octavian and Antony led some 21 or 22 legions to the east. They crossed the Adriatic in summer 42 BCE.
129. *when they crossed the Adriatic ... every engagement*: For the *Philippi*

campaign see *Brut.* 24–53.

130. *because of a dream ... experienced: Brut.* 41, and, for the differences among the various versions of this dream, n. 226 there.
131. *though some writers have said ... enemy: Brut.* 42 and n. 228. Plutarch here makes it clear that he rejects this version; in *Brutus* he seems to accept it.
132. *Cassius ... trusted freedmen: Brut.* 43.
133. *Brutus ... took his own life:* 23 October 42 BCE (*Brut.* 51–2).
134. *Gaius ... murder of Cicero:* C. Antonius (ch. 15) had been captured in March 43 BCE; Brutus had kept him alive for some time, then sent orders to Q. Hortensius, governor of Macedonia (*MRR* ii.345), to kill him. Plutarch leaves the role of Hortensius unexplained.
135. *5,000 drachmas:* Cf. n. 102. Vast sums – perhaps 150,000 talents (cf. n. 143) – were needed, way beyond even the capacity of the eastern provinces. Antony eventually demanded the equivalent of nine years' tribute, to be paid over two years.
136. *the Temple of Pythian Apollo ... the senate:* I.e. the famous temple, that at Delphi, and the promise was made to the senate at Rome (though some have interpreted this as a temple either at Megara or at Athens, and the promise as made to a local senate).
137. *Lucius Censorinus:* L. Marcius Censorinus, praetor in 43 BCE, now proconsul in Macedonia and Achaëa (*MRR* ii.362, 374, 382), then consul in 39. Antony crossed to Asia in spring 41.
138. *wives ... give themselves up to his pleasure:* Plutarch may well be generalizing from the single case of Glaphyra, wife of Archelaus of Cappadocia: Octavian wrote some filthy elegiacs about their alleged affair (Martial 11.20).
139. *Lute-players like Anaxenor:* Mentioned by Strabo 14.1.41 as a citizen of Magnesia.
140. *'laden with paeans and moans of despair':* From Oedipus's opening speech in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (4–5). When Plutarch quotes this elsewhere (four times in the moral essays), he makes it clear that he takes 'paean' to mean 'hymn of joy' and points the paradox of such songs mingling with cries of misery. That misreads Sophocles, for 'paean' there just means a 'hymn to Apollo' for healing and deliverance, but it suits the mixture of moods now in Ephesus.
141. *hailed him as Dionysus ... Bringer of Joy:* Antony's cavalcade here is swiftly mirrored by Cleopatra's arrival at Tarsus (ch. 26), with Cleopatra as Aphrodite just as Antony is hailed as Dionysus. Plutarch is the only source to date Antony's association with Dionysus as early as 41 BCE; others suggest that it began in 39

(chs. 33–4), when an inscription shows that he was celebrated in Athens as ‘the god, the new Dionysus’ (cf. n. 261) and he and Octavia were both hailed as ‘Gods and Benefactors’. Antony clearly encouraged it at this later stage, but Ephesus may well have anticipated this by offering some honours in 41: divine honours had been paid to Roman generals before (n. in Pelling, *LA*).

142. *Dionysus of Savagery and Wildness*: Euripides’ *Bacchae* memorably explores the complex character of Dionysus, ‘most dreadful but most gentle to mortals’ (861). He was naturally a ‘god of many names’, worshipped under many titles (Sophocles *Antigone* 1115). For these crueller aspects, cf. the human sacrifice to ‘Dionysus of Savagery’ before Salamis (*Them.* 13) and his festival of ‘Wildness’ (Greek *Agrionia*) where, in Plutarch’s own day, a woman had been killed.
143. *Hybreas*: An orator from Mylasa in Caria. This anecdote is suspect: Asia could not pay 200,000 talents, and Antony did not demand a double tribute; he imposed nine years’ tribute to be paid over two years (n. 135).
144. *Such people ... superior wisdom*: At *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 51c–d Plutarch describes this sort of calculated frankness as the flatterer’s ‘craftiest trick’, and uses the same simile of the ‘piquant sauce’. He may well be applying that stereotype here, assuming that Antony’s flatterers must have behaved like that. The consummate ‘flatterer’ is to be Cleopatra herself (ch. 29): this description of Antony here is soon complemented by her introductory characterization (ch. 27), and we see how vulnerable such a ‘simple’ person is to her ‘charm and subtlety’ (ch. 25).
145. *Cleopatra*: Queen of Egypt since 51 BCE, when she was eighteen.
146. *the point of frenzy*: The Greek word is *anabaccheusas*, suggesting a ‘Bacchic’ frenzy that picks up the notion of Antony as Dionysus (ch. 24): Cleopatra is exciting a tendency that is already there in Antony’s temperament.
147. *campaign against the Parthians*: See n. 158.
148. *the charge ... help in the war*: The terms of this ‘charge’ seem overstated, and Antony might reasonably be persuaded by her defence. Cleopatra had sent four legions to help the triumvirs, but their commander had led them over to Cassius’s side, and her admiral had also given Cassius use of her fleet. After that she had made some further (perhaps half-hearted) gestures on the triumvirs’ side.
149. *Dellius*: Q. Dellius, who later wrote a history of the war (Intro.). He is probably the source for the meeting in Cilicia, so finely described. He deserted Antony in 31 BCE, and later rose to high

favour with Augustus.

150. *to come to Cilicia ... splendour: Iliad* 14.162: the original is in fact ‘to come to Ida ...’. Hera duly ‘decks’ herself ‘in all her splendour’ and goes to seduce Zeus, while Greeks and Trojans suffer terribly: this union of the two godlike mortals will be similarly attended by war and misery for others.
151. *to enchant Julius Caesar ... son of Pompey*: Cn. Pompey had visited Egypt in 49 BCE, raising money and forces; Plutarch is the only source to suggest that he and Cleopatra were lovers. Caesar arrived in 48 in pursuit of the elder Pompey. *Caes.* 48–9 tells the story of how Cleopatra, expelled from Egypt at the time, stole back to Alexandria and was borne to Caesar, hidden in a kitbag; how Caesar was captivated; and how he fought to regain her kingdom while she was bearing his son (Caesarion, n. 257).
152. *the age ... most mature*: Cleopatra was twenty-eight.
153. *She came sailing ... their fans*: This famous meeting took place at Tarsus in late summer 41 BCE. The glory of Plutarch’s description, engaging hearing and smell as well as vision, was recognized by Shakespeare, who closely based *Antony and Cleopatra* II.2.195–223 on this. At least some of the details – the gilded poop, the purple sails, possibly even Cleopatra as Aphrodite – are likely to be accurate (n. in Pelling, *LA*). It also mirrors Antony’s Dionysiac arrival in ch. 24 (n. 141): that is caught by the cry that ‘Aphrodite was coming to revel with Dionysus’ – but that optimistic ‘for the happiness of Asia’ turns out sadly awry.
154. *extraordinary number of lights*: Virgil’s description of Dido’s banquet for Aeneas shows many similarities to this: that too stresses the torches hanging from the ceilings (*Aeneid* 1.726–7). Virgil may well be echoing Cleopatra’s banqueting, and suggesting that Dido prefigured this new crisis for Rome’s destiny. If so, it suggests that the Cilician feasting became legendary at an early stage.
155. *Her own beauty ... beholder*: Cleopatra soon became stereotyped in legend as ‘the most beautiful woman alive’ (Dio 42.34.3–5), but the coin portraits support Plutarch’s more qualified description: these show a high brow, a determined expression, large eyes and a down-turned nose.
156. *given up their native Macedonian dialect*: That is, they had spoken the universal (*koine*) form of Greek.
157. *Fulvia his wife ... her husband’s interests*: The Perusine War of 40 BCE (cf. ch. 30 and n. 167). For Fulvia see ch. 10 and n. 64.
158. *a Parthian army under Labienus*: A Parthian War had been looming for some time, and Antony himself launched a preliminary attack in late 41 BCE. Parthia responded with this mobilization, and

fighting resumed in spring 40. Q. Labienus, son of the general of Caesar who went over to Pompey in 49 (*Caes.* 18, 34), had been sent by Cassius and Brutus to seek Parthian help against the triumvirs, and was now continuing that Republican policy of exploiting Parthia.

159. *'Parthian commander'*: Probably a misunderstanding: coins bear the inscription Q. LABIENUS PARTHICUS IMPERATOR, but that probably means that he 1. took the cognomen *Parthicus* and 2. was acclaimed as Imperator (n. 231), rather than 'Q. Labienus, the Parthian general'.
160. *carry him off to Alexandria*: Like a slave, the language suggests. This was probably late autumn 41 BCE.
161. *Antiphon*: It has been disputed since antiquity whether the late fifth-century politician and orator Antiphon of Rhamnus (executed in 411 BCE, Thucydides 8.68) was the same as Antiphon the sophist. If they were different, this fragment probably comes from the sophist: in the standard edition of the Presocratics, Diels–Kranz print it as 87 fr. 77.
162. *the Inimitable Livers*: Cf. ch. 71.
163. *Philotas ... used to tell my grandfather Lamprias*: A reminder of how much information may go back to oral tradition (General Intro. III). Lamprias is introduced several times as a speaker in *Table Talk*. He was perhaps fifty years younger than Philotas, but one can believe the hint – 'the stories which ... Philotas was always telling' – of an engagingly garrulous old man enjoying the attention of the young Lamprias, and Lamprias, 'at his most inventive and talkative when in his cups' (*Table Talk* 1.5.622e), not being so very different when he grew old himself.
164. *Antony's eldest son by Fulvia*: M. Antonius Antyllus, born in 47/46, the infant hostage of ch. 14. He died in 30 (ch. 81). He was clearly as open-handed as his grandfather (ch. 1) and his father before him.
165. *Plato speaks of four kinds of flattery*: At *Gorgias* 462c–466a, a long passage in which one of the four forms of flattery is 'the art of the pastry-cook': so in a muted way the allusion continues the theme of elaborate cookery from ch. 28.
166. *training him as her pupil*: This picks up the image of ch. 10, where 'Cleopatra should really have paid tuition fees to Fulvia' for giving Antony his elementary education in submissiveness.
167. *his brother Lucius and Fulvia ... forced to flee from Italy*: Plutarch wrongly implies that now, in early 40 BCE, is the first Antony would have heard of the Perusine War. The troubles centred on the settling of veterans of the Philippi campaign, and the violent dispossessions that this necessitated throughout Italy. It was

- Octavian's task to organize the settlements. Lucius rallied the discontented, initially opposed but eventually supported by Fulvia. In autumn 41 Lucius was besieged in Perusia, and the city fell in early spring 40. He was then sent to govern Spain (so for him 'forced to flee from Italy' overstates); Fulvia fled to Greece.
168. *Labienus ... Ionia*: For Labienus see ch. 28 and n. 158. He easily conquered Syria in spring 40 BCE, then swept on through Cilicia to the Ionian coast.
169. *Antony ... advanced as far as Phoenicia*: To Tyre. In fact, Antony was not slow to react to this crisis: he arrived at Tyre too late to save Syria, but Syria fell very quickly.
170. *Fulvia ... had hoped ... hostilities in Italy*: Unfair: the troubles in Italy were well advanced before news of Antony's affair with Cleopatra could reach Italy (autumn 41 BCE).
171. *They made the Ionian Sea ... hold this office in turn*: This is the agreement reached in the treaty of Brundisium, September 40 BCE.
172. *Octavia ... older than himself*: She was born about 70 BCE and married C. Marcellus (n. 23) before 54. They had three children (ch. 87).
173. *Octavia ... daughter of Anchoris, while he was the child ... of Atia*: Wrong: Octavia too was Atia's child, and Octavian's full sister.
174. *Octavia ... her beauty*: Again mentioned at ch. 57. Coin-portraits suggest a kindly, round face.
175. *The law ... until ten months had elapsed after her husband's death*: Traditionally a law of Numa (*Numa* 12). Widowers were under no such restriction, and so Antony did not need any similar dispensation.
176. *Sextus Pompey's forces ... Sicily*: Plutarch has so far simplified by omitting all mention of Pompey's son Sextus. He was outlawed in 43 and proscribed in 42; since then, he had gathered a large fleet, rallied various discontented groups and raided and blockaded Italy. Both Octavian and Antony had approached him before, and the possibility of including Sextus in the agreement had been made explicit in the terms agreed at Brundisium (ch. 30).
177. *Menas and Menecrates*: Also mentioned by Appian, though he calls Menas 'Menodorus'; that may be the more correct form.
178. *Antony's mother ... fled from Rome with Fulvia*: After the Perusine War (n. 167). For Julia see chs. 2 with n. 4, 20. Her confidence in fleeing to Sextus in late 40 BCE suggests that he and Antony were already coming to some understanding.
179. *They met at ... Misenum*: Summer 39 BCE.
180. *'it is the only ancestral home left to me'*: Cf. chs. 10 (with n. 62) and 21 for Antony's purchase of Pompey's house. Plutarch simplifies

the joke: Sextus said that ‘he was giving the dinner in his “Ships’ Keels”’ [Latin *carinae*], where *Carinae* was also the name for Rome’s Mayfair district, where the house was located.

181. *After this treaty ... Ventidius ... Parthian advance*: The military man P. Ventidius was a legendary rags-to-riches type (ch. 34): consul for the last months of 43 BCE (*MRR* ii.337), he fought in the Perusine War in 40, then was sent on this mission as proconsul (*MRR* ii.383, 388) – probably in fact a year earlier than this, after Brundisium (ch. 30) rather than Misenum.
182. *priest of Julius Caesar*: Antony was designated as priest before Caesar’s death in 44 BCE, but delayed his inauguration until now.
183. *in their various diversions ... worsted by Octavian*: Plutarch tells the same stories in *On the Fortune of the Romans* 319f–20a. They may have originated in the propaganda exchanges of 33–32 (ch. 58 and n. 262). Octavian enjoyed gambling (Suet. *Aug.* 70–71), and Antony doubtless attacked him for it: these stories would have made good replies.
184. *a daughter*: The elder Antonia, who grew up to marry L. Domitius Ahenobarbus: ch. 87 and n. 389.
185. *Ventidius ... Phranipates*: *MRR* ii.388: Ventidius first defeated Labienus at the Cilician Gates, then Phranipates, satrap of Syria, at Mt Amanus.
186. *the office of gymnasiarch*: That is, ‘master of the gymnasium’. Many Greek states had this prestigious local office. The ‘rods’ were the sticks of office, a relic of a time when the gymnasiarch had been a genuine trainer who would use them to chastise slackers.
187. *to set out for the Parthian campaign*: Spring 38 BCE.
188. *the sacred olive tree of Athena ... Clepsydra*: The sacred tree was on the Acropolis, the Clepsydra was a well below its north-west face.
189. *Pacorus ... defeated by Ventidius in the region of Cyrrhestica*: At Gindarus, north-east of Antioch, in spring 38 BCE (*MRR* ii.393).
190. *the disaster that they had suffered under Crassus*: At Carrhae in 53 BCE (*Crass.* 17–33).
191. *Antiochus of Commagene*: King since c. 69 BCE, he had supported Pompey in the Civil War, then more decisively the Parthians: his son-in-law was their king Orodes.
192. *celebrate his triumph*: Which he did on 27 November 38 BCE. He died soon afterwards.
193. *only man ... triumph over the Parthians*: Shortly after Plutarch wrote this, Trajan was voted the right to as many triumphs as he wished (CE 115). He died before he returned to Rome, but a posthumous triumph was celebrated in 117–18.
194. *Sosius ... Caucasus*: Both these campaigns followed shortly after

those of Ventidius. C. Sossius, the future consul of 32 BCE, became governor of Syria on Ventidius's departure, and his campaign led to the defeat of Antigonus (n. 205) and the capture of Jerusalem in 37 (MRR ii.393, 397–8). P. Canidius Crassus, consul in 40, campaigned between the Black Sea and the Caspian in 36 (MRR ii.401), probably preparing the ground for Antony's invasion of Parthia. He later plays an important role in the Parthian and Actium campaigns (chs. 42, 56, 63–8, 71).

195. *he sailed ... to Tarentum*: Spring 37 BCE. Negotiations were protracted: agreement was not reached before July or August.
196. *two daughters ... again pregnant*: The unborn child was the younger Antonia, born 31 January 36 BCE; for the first daughter see ch. 33 and n. 184. It is unclear if Plutarch was right and there was a third Antonia between these two; if there was, she must have died in infancy. Cf. ch. 87 and n. 382.
197. *Agrippa and Maecenas*: Octavian's two most famous lifetime friends. For Agrippa's role at Actium see chs. 65–6; for his descendants, ch. 87.
198. *They arrived at an agreement ... to her husband*: The figures at App. *Civil Wars* 5.95 show small variations (20,000 men instead of two legions, 120 instead of a hundred ships, ten instead of twenty light vessels). Another important feature of the agreement was the renewal of the triumvirate for a further five years.
199. *Sextus Pompey ... Sicily*: The last we heard of Sextus (ch. 32) he was still an ally; Plutarch has omitted fighting between Octavian and Sextus as early as 38 BCE, when Sextus won two important naval victories. The exchanges resumed in 36, and Octavian won the decisive victory at Naulochus in September.
200. *Antony crossing to Asia*: Autumn 37 BCE.
201. *the rebellious ... horse which Plato describes*: *Phaedrus* 254a. Plato's figure has one of the two horses of the soul react with restraint at the sight of a handsome boy, and the other fight against the driver as he strives for sexual fulfilment.
202. *Fonteius Capito*: A close friend of Antony who went on to be consul in 33 BCE.
203. *Phoenicia ... large part of Cilicia*: This was all part of a broader reorganization of the East to secure Antony's rear before his Parthian campaign: Cleopatra was not the only friendly monarch to be favoured (CAH x2.28–30). By 'Phoenicia' Plutarch probably means the coastal region near Sidon, but excluding the free cities of Sidon itself and Tyre; 'Coele Syria' is apparently the region around Chalcis, in modern Lebanon; this 'large part of Cilicia' seems to be 'Rough' Cilicia, opposite Cyprus. This and Cyprus itself had already been in Cleopatra's possession for several years.

- Cleopatra also received Cyrene and Crete, possibly now.
204. *the region ... produces balsam*: I.e. the groves around Jericho.
 205. *Antigonus of Judaea ... beheaded*: After his defeat in 37 BCE (n. 194).
 206. *the Sun and the Moon*: Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, born in 40 BCE. Cleopatra and Antony then had a third child, Ptolemy Philadelphus, in 36.
 207. *any Solonian laws*: Solon of course lived much later than legend placed Heracles. Plutarch here makes Antony use Solon as the archetypal lawgiver, and his language reflects the idea that human 'laws' restrain a superman's 'nature': the terms are those favoured in fifth-century BCE sophistic debate.
 208. *put his father Orodes to death ... Parthia*: Orodes abdicated in late 38 or 37, in grief (it was said) at the death of Pacorus (ch. 34 and n. 189). His successor Phraates promptly killed most of his family, including Orodes himself.
 209. *Monaeses ... refuge with Antony*: Monaeses came from a famous Parthian noble family. Horace *Odes* 3.6.9–12 links him with Pacorus as winners of Parthian victories over Rome: it is uncertain whether Monaeses won this victory during the 36 BCE campaign, and if so how it squares with this defection to Antony. Perhaps he was playing a double game. Rightly or wrongly, Antony continued to trust him (ch. 46).
 210. *Larissa ... Themistocles*: All three cities were in Syria. For Themistocles' flight and Xerxes' famous gift of three cities see *Them.* 26–30, Thucydides 1.126–8.
 211. *sending him a 'right hand'*: The phrase is often used of giving a pledge, and probably a symbolic model hand was genuinely sent.
 212. *the Roman standards ... Crassus was defeated*: In 53 BCE (n. 190). Augustus eventually recovered these by negotiation in 20 BCE.
 213. *a place ... his allies*: This was somewhere in Armenia. But the geography is confused, as Antony had wintered in Antioch, and was already some way north of 'Arabia'. The muster was perhaps in June 36 BCE.
 214. *Artavasdes, king of Armenia*: Not to be confused with Artavasdes of Media (n. 221). This Artavasdes had tried to help Crassus in 54–53 (*Crass.* 19, 22), but had then made his peace with Orodes. His sister married Pacorus (ch. 34), and may well have been one of Phraates' victims (n. 208). At ch. 50 Plutarch speaks of 16,000, not 6,000, Armenian cavalry; perhaps one figure is wrong, perhaps more cavalry joined the campaign after the initial muster.
 215. *the cavalry brigaded ... Celts*: I.e. auxiliaries: these 'Iberians' may have been Spaniards, or may have been Caucasus Iberians

recruited by Canidius (n. 194).

- 216. *he took the field prematurely*: The criticism will derive from Octavian's propaganda, but is misconceived: speed was of the essence, and Antony was indeed moving quickly (n. in Pelling, LA).
- 217. *under the influence ... magic spell*: At ch. 25 Cleopatra's 'magical arts and charms' were the spellbinding elements of her personality; now the figure has turned more sinister, for this 'drug or magic spell' might even be real (cf. ch. 60).
- 218. *leave this equipment behind*: In fact, the orders were to follow the main force (Dio 49.25.2): they had nearly caught up when they were attacked.
- 219. *Statianus*: Oppius Statianus, Antony's legate (MRR ii.404–5).
- 220. *Phraata*: The capital of Media Atropatene, alternatively known as Phraaspa. Its location is uncertain.
- 221. *king of Media*: Artavasdes: Plutarch does not name him throughout the account, presumably to avoid confusion with Artavasdes of Armenia (n. 214).
- 222. *Polemon*: King of Pontus since the previous year. He was soon ransomed, and continued to support Antony (ch. 61).
- 223. *the prime mover of the war in the first place*: Dio 49.25.1 says that Artavasdes encouraged Antony to attack via Media because of his enmity with the Median Artavasdes (n. 221).
- 224. *decimation ... troops guilty of cowardice*: This Roman tradition had recently come back into fashion: instances are attested for 49 BCE (Caesar), 39 (Domitius Calvinus) and 34 (Octavian).
- 225. *Domitius Ahenobarbus*: Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (Shakespeare's 'Enobarbus', Intro.). Like his fierce anti-Caesarian father (*Cato* 41 and n. 214) he had supported the Republicans in the Civil Wars, but he joined Antony before Brundisium (40 BCE, n. 171) and became one of his most trusted lieutenants. He was consul in 32. See ch. 56 and, for his desertion, ch. 63.
- 226. *Mardian tribe*: There were several Mardian tribes: Plutarch probably means one in Southern Armenia.
- 227. *The man ... Armenia*: This is one of several features of the Parthian narrative that recalls a scene in Xen. *Anab.* (4.2.1): cf. chs. 45 and 49, with nn. 235 and 240.
- 228. *Flavius Gallus*: Not otherwise known.
- 229. *Titius, the quaestor*: M. Titius (MRR ii.401). He went on to be consul in 31 BCE, and during the Actium campaign was noted for his opposition to Cleopatra (ch. 58).
- 230. *Canidius*: See n. 194.
- 231. *hailed him as their Imperator*: Such salutations normally followed victories (cf. n. 159, *Sert.* 22, *Brut.* 34): here, as at *Otho* 15, it is a

pointed paradox in defeat.

232. *legionaries in front ... towards the second rank*: The so-called testudo or 'tortoise' of locked shields over the heads, especially useful when attacking a defended wall.
233. *choenix*: A Greek dry measure: about one and a half pounds or three-quarters of a kilogram.
234. *a herb ... sickness*: The symptoms are like those of ergotism, which produces psychoses similar to those given by LSD: it is caused by eating rye or grasses infected with a poisonous fungus.
235. *'O, the Ten Thousand!' ... stronger opposition*: The suggestions of Xen. *Anab.* (n. 227) become explicit. In 401–399 the retreat from Cunaxa, the scene of Cyrus's defeat, to the Black Sea was seven or eight times as long as Antony's retreat from Phraata to Armenia.
236. *Monaeses ... three cities*: Ch. 37 and n. 209. Mithridates and Alexander are both otherwise unknown.
237. *the fate of Crassus awaits him!*: That is, annihilation in an open plain as in 53 BCE (n. 190).
238. *Rhamnus ... cut off his head*: As Cassius had similarly prepared Pindarus to kill him when the time came (ch. 22, *Brut.* 43). At ch. 76 Eros will fulfil a similar role.
239. *the same defensive formation ... so as to cover one another with shields*: The testudo again: ch. 46 and n. 232.
240. *threw their arms around one another ... sighted land*: At Xen. *Anab.* 4.7.20–27 the Ten Thousand similarly embrace one another in tearful joy, in their case because they have just sighted 'The sea! The sea!'
241. *the sixteen thousand horsemen which he withdrew ... in Media*: Ch. 39. On the figure of 16,000 see n. 214.
242. *These events ... took place at a later date*: In 34 BCE: a coin of about 32 BCE celebrates 'the conquest of Armenia' (Crawford, *RRC* nr. 543), though there were also criticisms of Antony for bad faith (cf. *Comp. Demetr.–Ant.* 5). The 'triumph' in Alexandria was probably no more than a Dionysiac procession, as amply precedented there and especially suitable for Antony as Dionysus–Osiris (n. 141); but it may well have been viewed as a 'triumph' when reported disapprovingly at Rome. For the possible connection with the 'Donations of Alexandria' see n. 255.
243. *winter ... on the march*: This last phase of the march was through Armenia to winter-quarters in, probably, Cappadocia or Commagene.
244. *Berytus*: Modern Beirut.
245. *king of the Medes*: The other Artavasdes, once again unnamed (n. 221). According to Dio 49.33 and 44, the Median king initially sought Antony's help for an attack on Artavasdes of Armenia (n.

214) rather than on Phraates: it was this campaign that was begun but then abandoned on Octavia's arrival in 35 BCE (ch. 53). It was only later, in 33, that the Median Artavasdes and Antony developed a further plan for an attack on Parthia. They met on the River Araxes, but the campaign was then given up. Plutarch fuses the two campaign-plans and simplifies.

246. *Most people agree*: It is uncertain whether Plutarch here refers to written sources (in which case their unfriendly treatment of Octavian is remarkable) or to oral tradition, or if he is giving his own view more weight by reconstructing what wise observers – he thinks – must surely have said.
247. *When Octavia arrived in Athens*: Probably spring 35 BCE.
248. *two thousand picked men ... praetorian guards*: I.e. his personal bodyguard, the forerunner of the 'praetorian guard' of the principate (*Galb.* 2 etc.). But Octavian had promised 20,000 men, not 2,000.
249. *march from Syria and join the king of Media*: See n. 245.
250. *her flatterers ... killing her*: In *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 61a–b Plutarch uses this example as a more straightforward case of flattery, and there Antony simply 'takes delight' in what he hears. Here he is agonized. It is likely that Plutarch is elaborating the whole scene: Cleopatra may not even have been with Antony when he heard of Octavia's arrival.
251. *journey to Media*: This is probably the expedition begun but abandoned in 33 BCE (n. 245).
252. *betrothal of one of the king's daughters ... to one of his sons by Cleopatra*: The girl's name was Iotape, and she was betrothed to Alexander Helios (n. 206) in 34. She came to Alexandria in 33.
253. *Octavia returned from Athens ... set up her own household*: Octavia returned possibly in late 35, possibly not till 34. Plutarch is our only source for Octavian's pressure for a divorce at this time, but it is at least credible that Octavian was by now exploiting his sister's maltreatment in his propaganda, perhaps saying that she was entitled to a divorce even if too noble to seek one.
254. *one out of love ... jealousy over a woman*: Octavia is determined not to be a Helen (ch. 6).
255. *distribution of territory ... in favour of the children*: These are the much-discussed 'Donations of Alexandria', 34 BCE (n. in Pelling, *LA, CAH* x2.40–41). It may well be that this happened at the same time, and perhaps at the same ceremony, as the 'triumph' over Artavasdes (n. 242). Whatever the symbolic suggestions of the distribution, it made no difference to the actual administration of the East: most of Cleopatra's territories were hers already, and she already in theory shared the throne with Caesarion (n. 257);

Alexander Helios's hopes of Media depended on his future as the king's son-in-law (n. 252); Parthia was only a hope for the future. Other territories, e.g. Syria and 'Libya' (i.e. Cyrene), continued to have Roman governors and commanders.

- 256. *the gymnasium*: Alexandria's finest building, with colonnades more than 200 metres long. It will also be the scene of Octavian's contrasting display in ch. 80.
- 257. *Caesarion ... pregnant*: Caesarion was born in 47 BCE (*Caes.* 49); for his death, see chs. 81–2. Caesar's paternity has been disputed since antiquity.
- 258. *Kings of Kings*: This is a not unusual Oriental title (*Luc.* 14 and n. 78), but there is probably a mistake here: Dio 49.41 more plausibly says that Caesarion was to be King of Kings and Cleopatra Queen of Kings.
- 259. *Ptolemy*: Ptolemy Philadelphus (n. 206).
- 260. *tiara ... diadem*: The tiara was itself a fabric turban; only kings could wear their turbans 'upright', raised conically to a point. It was distinctively Armenian and Median. The 'woollen hat' (Greek *kausia*), like the military cloak, had become associated with Macedonia. Alexander too had combined *kausia* and the simple linen diadem (n. 74).
- 261. *Cleopatra ... New Isis*: Egyptian queens had long been identified with Isis, but the title 'New Isis' seems to originate with Cleopatra herself; her father Ptolemy XII had similarly been 'New Dionysus', as had Antony himself (ch. 60; cf. n. 141).
- 262. *denouncing him in public ... against Octavian*: The propaganda exchanges had been going on for some time, but intensified after 36 BCE (*CAH* x2.42–6). This particular exchange took place in 33–32 (cf. n. 183).
- 263. *after capturing Sicily ... nothing for Antony's*: This refers to Octavian's doings in 36 BCE, the defeat of Sextus Pompey (n. 199) and the driving of Lepidus into exile and disgrace (*CAH* x2.34–6). The borrowed ships are those of ch. 35 (n. 198): only seventy had been returned.
- 264. *had they not added these ... commander?* Savage sarcasm, but of a sort that Antony and his men would find particularly outrageous: they had indeed performed 'gallant' service for Rome, even if they had failed.
- 265. *Antony ... answer reached him*: Mid summer 33 BCE.
- 266. *Canidius*: See chs. 34 (with n. 194) and 42.
- 267. *Cleopatra provided two hundred of these*: Of which sixty fought at Actium (chs. 64 and 66).
- 268. *Domitius*: Domitius Ahenobarbus (n. 225). He was consul for the first months of 32 BCE along with Sosius (n. 194), and had seen

- what harm Antony's association with Cleopatra was doing him in the capital: he now came to Antony in late February or March.
269. *fate had decreed ... Octavian*: Cf. *Brut.* 47 with n. 244, *Intros. Brut.* and *Ant.*
270. *the two sailed together to Samos*: Spring 32 BCE. No doubt, as usual on campaign, there was time to kill, and Antony and Cleopatra would have killed it in style.
271. *Artists of Dionysus*: Guilds of musicians, actors and dancers (cf. *Luc.* 29, *Brut.* 21): see J. Lightfoot in P. Easterling and E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors* (2002), pp. 209–24.
272. *he sailed on to Athens*: Early summer 32 BCE.
273. *the Athenians were ... devoted to her*: Octavia had spent the first winter of their marriage in Athens (ch. 33), and the Athenians had honoured her and Antony as 'Gods and Benefactors' (n. 141).
274. *to turn Octavia out of her house*: Cf. *Cato* 24 and n. 107. The divorce took place in May–June 32 BCE.
275. *Antyllus ... who was with his father*: Ch. 28 and n. 164.
276. *Octavia was her match ... in beauty*: Both women were thirty-seven or thirty-eight (nn. 145, 172): on Cleopatra's beauty, see ch. 27 and n. 155; on Octavia's, ch. 31 and n. 174.
277. *Full citizens ... disturbances broke out all over Italy*: More details both of taxes (freedmen with property worth more than 200,000 sesterces paid the levy) and of disturbances at Dio 50.10.
278. *Antony's postponement ... greatest errors of judgement*: If people did say this (and Plutarch may be imaginatively reconstructing), the criticisms were misdirected: the only way Antony could have hurried on the war would have been by invading Italy. That would always have been logistically as well as politically difficult with Octavian controlling the two great harbours of Brundisium and Tarentum, and would be particularly ill-advised late in the campaigning season.
279. *Titius and Plancus*: See nn. 111, 229. Titius was not in fact consul until the following year (31 BCE).
280. *the clause which dealt with Antony's burial ... to Cleopatra in Egypt*: Other clauses recognized Caesarion (n. 257) as Caesar's son and gave vast gifts to Antony's children by Cleopatra. The authenticity of the will's provisions is doubtful: there was doubtless *some* will in the Vestals' possession, but they would not know its content, and Octavian could allege what he wished.
281. *Calvisius*: C. Calvisius Sabinus had been consul in 39 BCE, and had then commanded a fleet against Sextus Pompey (n. 263).
282. *the libraries at Pergamum*: Founded by Eumenes II in the first half of the second century BCE, the Pergamene library was the nearest rival of the great library at Alexandria.

283. *Furnius*: Praetor in 42 BCE, C. Furnius had served with both Plancus and Titius, but he now stayed loyal to Antony. In a letter to him of 43 BCE Cicero alludes to his experience as an advocate (*Ad Fam.* 10.26.2).
284. *Geminus*: Possibly C. Geminus, attested as a senator in 39 BCE.
285. *to confess ... torture*: As would be appropriate for a slave.
286. *Marcus Silanus ... Dellius the historian*: M. Iunius Silanus had by now supported Lepidus, then Antony, then Sextus, then Antony again and now Octavian: he became consul in 25 BCE. For Dellius, see ch. 25 and Intro.: he in fact deserted at a later stage, taking with him Antony's battle-plans for Actium.
287. *were served with vinegar ... were drinking Falernian*: Probably he meant that all this ostentatious luxury was vinegar to them, compared to the fine wine of freedom on the other side. A rash comment if true: Dellius doubtless told the story himself ('he mentions ...'), true or false. Sarmentus, a freedman of Maecenas, was notorious for his beauty and his wit; he was rather older than Plutarch's language here suggests.
288. *declaring war on Cleopatra*: Late summer 32 BCE. War was declared on Cleopatra alone, to ensure that when Antony supported her he could be represented as a traitor.
289. *depriving Antony ... in his place*: The triumvirate had in fact expired anyway at the end of 33 BCE, but that left Antony's constitutional position vague rather than unsupportable (*CAH* x2.26–7, 48, 67–8).
290. *influence of drugs*: Cf. ch. 37 and n. 217.
291. *Pisaurum*: Modern Pesaro. This colony of Antony's veterans was settled after Philippi (cf. n. 167).
292. *as I have mentioned earlier in this Life ... Hercules*: Ch. 4.
293. *he liked to associate himself ... New Dionysus*: Chs. 24, 50 and nn. 141, 261.
294. *statues ... inscribed*: Eumenes II and Attalus I of Pergamum. It was not uncommon for statues' inscriptions to be changed in this way.
295. *'eights' or 'tens'*: Technical terms of uncertain significance (but certainly indicating magnificence and size): perhaps eight or ten men to the oar, perhaps two banks with four or five men to the oar. Octavian's were smaller (n. 299).
296. *The subject kings ... Amyntas of Lycaonia and Galatia*: Bogud was in fact king of Mauretania. The text is not certain: Bogud was co-ruler with Bocchus (perhaps his brother), and the manuscripts have 'Bocchus' here. But the two men were by now on different sides, and it was Bogud who supported Antony. For Polemon see n. 222; for the other kings see n. in Pelling, *LA*. 'Philadelphus' is Deiotarus Philadelphus of Paphlagonia; Amyntas also was in fact

- present in person (on both cf. ch. 63 and n. 304).
297. *king of the Medes*: Artavasdes, still not named (n. 221).
298. *‘endured so much’*: An allusion to Euripides *Heracles* 1250, where Theseus is chiding Heracles for wanting to kill himself: ‘Is it Heracles, who has endured so much, that is saying this?’ The Herculean resonance will be no coincidence (cf. ch. 4).
299. *not ... built to an ostentatious height ... easy to manoeuvre*: Octavian apparently had no ship bigger than a ‘six’ against Antony’s ‘eights’ and ‘tens’ (n. 295), but the contrast should not be overstated: these would be the ships with which he had beaten Sextus (n. 199), and they too were remarkable for their bulk.
300. *Nicopolis*: Octavian founded this ‘City of Victory’ to commemorate the battle after winning it: the note here presages the outcome. It is close to the modern Preveza.
301. *crossing the Ionian Sea*: Spring 31 BCE.
302. *sitting on the ladle*: ‘Ladle’ was slang for a penis. ‘Caesar’ is of course here Octavian.
303. *Domitius*: Domitius Ahenobarbus (n. 225). He had been arguing that Cleopatra should be sent home to Egypt (ch. 56): hence, doubtless, her animosity now (‘against Cleopatra’s inclinations’).
304. *Amyntas and Deiotarus*: See ch. 61 and n. 296: Plutarch does not seem to realize that ‘Deiotarus’ is the same as ‘Philadelphus’ there.
305. *the attitude he had taken up before*: Ch. 56.
306. *the Sicilian campaign against Sextus Pompey*: See n. 263.
307. *‘tens’*: See n. 295. It is likely that Antony manned just under 200 ships in the battle (probably excluding Cleopatra’s sixty), and Octavian over 400.
308. *the two fleets met*: For the battle of Actium (2 September 31 BCE) see n. in Pelling, *LA, CAH* x2.54–9 and W. M. Murray in V. B. Gorman and E. W. Robinson (eds.), *Oikistes (Mnemosyne Supplement 234 (2002))*, 339–50.
309. *Publicola ... Marcus Insteius*: *MRR* ii.421–2. Publicola is L. Gellius Publicola, the consul of 36 BCE and the ‘Gellius’ derided by Catullus. ‘Coelius’ is a mistake, for C. Sosius (n. 194) commanded the centre. Little is known about Octavius or Insteius.
310. *Octavian ... right wing himself*: Plutarch should also have noted that L. Arruntius commanded the centre (ch. 66 and n. 313).
311. *Taurus*: T. Statilius Taurus (*MRR* ii.422), consul in 37 and 26, ‘the greatest Augustan marshal after Agrippa’ (*OCD*³).
312. *Octavian set up many of the beaks ... decorate the place*: The large monument, erected on the site of his tent, is still visible above Nicopolis (n. 300).
313. *Arruntius*: L. Arruntius (*MRR* ii.421), the future consul of 22 BCE.

- He should have been mentioned in ch. 65 (n. 310).
314. *the saying ... once uttered as a jest*: By the elder Cato, according to Plutarch elsewhere (*Elder Cato* 7, *A Book about Love* 759c).
 315. *Alexas ... Scellius*: Alexas is mentioned again at ch. 72. Scellius is not otherwise known.
 316. *light Liburnian vessels*: Fast, light galleys.
 317. *Eurycles the Spartan*: ‘The most notable personality in the history of Augustan Greece’ (G. W. Bowersock, *JRS* 51 (1961), 112–18), who was said to have abused his friendship with Augustus and therefore stirred up trouble at Sparta (Strabo 8.5.5). Plutarch knew his descendant C. Iulius Eurycles Herculaneus (General Intro. I), who is probably the dedicatee of *On Self-praise*: this story may be owed to him.
 318. *Theophilus, his steward in Corinth*: Like his son, he was a freedman: prominent individuals often used freedmen as their procurators (i.e. agents or stewards) to manage their affairs in particular regions, prefiguring the imperial procurators, themselves sometimes freedmen, who performed similar services for the emperors.
 319. *Hipparchus*: Again mentioned in ch. 74.
 320. *Not more than five thousand lost their lives*: An unexpectedly low number, as Plutarch’s ‘not more than’ suggests. The fighting does not seem to have been particularly fierce.
 321. *as Octavian has recorded*: In his *Memoirs* (cf. General Intro. III and Intros. *Ant.* and *Brut.*): this is fr. 16 P. = 17 M. = 14 Smith.
 322. *My great grandfather Nicarchus Chaeronea*: General Intro. I. Nicarchus was presumably Lamprias’s father, and Lamprias would have been the one to pass this story on to Plutarch.
 323. *Anticyra*: The nearest point to Chaeronea on the Corinthian Gulf, about a 30 km march over steep country.
 324. *Paraetonium*: Modern Mersah Matrûh, about 290 km west of Alexandria.
 325. *Aristocrates ... rhetorician*: Not otherwise known.
 326. *Lucilius ... written elsewhere*: At *Brut.* 50.
 327. *the man ... troops in Libya*: L. Pinarius Scarpus (*MRR* ii.422), in command of four legions in Cyrene.
 328. *The isthmus*: This is the neck of land between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Suez, regarded as an extension of what we call the Red Sea (though in antiquity ‘Red Sea’ was often extended to describe the whole Indian Ocean, and that may be what Plutarch means here). Plutarch underestimates the width of this isthmus: it is in fact about 100 miles across.
 329. *haul them overland*: Dio 51.7 more plausibly suggests that new galleys were to be built in the Gulf of Suez.

330. *the Arabs of the kingdom of Petra*: I.e. the inhabitants of Arabia Petraea, here presumably those in the Sinai peninsula.
331. *a house ... on a jetty running into the sea*: Also mentioned by Strabo 17.1.9 as a 'dwelling where he would live like a king'. Plutarch prefers to stress the solitariness: this Antony is *giving up* his regal pretensions.
332. *Timon ... lived about the time of the Peloponnesian War*: He is more likely to be legendary: as Plutarch's 'as one can infer' suggests, the passages in Aristophanes and Plato (next n.) will have been the reason why he was dated to the Peloponnesian War. According to Lucian's *Timon, or the Misanthrope* he gave freely of his vast wealth to his friends, but when he grew poor they abandoned him. Disillusioned, he took to the woods, and chanced on some gold: they came back to him, and he drove them off.
333. *plays of Aristophanes and of Plato*: This is Plato the comic poet, not the philosopher: this passage is the only evidence that he mentioned Timon (fr. 237 K.-A.). Aristophanes mentions him at *Birds* 1549 and *Lysistrata* 809–15.
334. *Alcibiades ... would be the cause of infinite mischief to Athens*: Plutarch tells the story again at *Alc.* 16.
335. *Festival of the Pitchers*: The Choes, the second day of the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria, when there was a lot of heavy drinking.
336. *Halae*: A deme on the west coast of Attica, near modern Voula.
337. *was composed by Callimachus*: It is more likely to be by Hegesippus. Plutarch may be confusing it with a different epigram also ascribed to Callimachus:

No 'farewell', I beg you, you scoundrel! No, just proceed on your way.
One thing alone 'fares' me 'well': that's if you laugh not at me.

338. *Herod of Judaea had declared for Octavian*: Herod met Octavian at Rhodes in spring 30 BCE.
339. *Caesarion ... Antyllus*: Caesarion (n. 257) was now sixteen, Antyllus (n. 164) about fifteen; the Greek ephebic ritual – ephebes were adolescent males as they made the transition to adulthood – was evidently felt appropriate for Cleopatra's son, the Roman for Antony's. Before manhood Roman boys of high standing wore the *toga praetexta* with a purple hem. All this was not mere show: their manhood needed to be marked if they were to be leaders in their own right.
340. *that society of the Inimitable Livers*: Ch. 28.
341. *the asp*: Probably the Egyptian cobra, famous for its painless and quick-acting bite. The painlessness is only relative: there is

initially no pain, but as the venom acts on the nervous system it brings various unpleasant symptoms, including convulsions (Plutarch's description is inaccurate in that respect).

- 342. *a delegation to Octavian in Asia*: Late 31. Octavian had moved to Samos and Ephesus after Actium. Here and in ch. 73 Plutarch may well be conflating details of several different embassies.
- 343. *Cleopatra ... throne of Egypt*: Presumably the younger children, not Caesarion.
- 344. *Euphronius ... Alexas of Laodicea*: Euphronius is not otherwise known. For Alexas see ch. 66 and n. 315.
- 345. *Timagenes*: Timagenes of Alexandria, an orator and historian who had worked at Rome since the mid 50s BCE and enjoyed the patronage of first Octavian, then Asinius Pollio.
- 346. *Thyrsus ... delivering a message ... proud of it*: Dio 51.8–9 gives a fuller version, in which Cleopatra is more clearly faithless to Antony: Thyrsus there tells Cleopatra that Octavian is in love with her, Cleopatra believes him and betrays Antony at Pelusium (ch. 74). Plutarch's language here hints at the erotic version, but does not develop it, and his Cleopatra is enigmatic and mysterious rather than unambiguously perfidious.
- 347. *you have my freedman Hipparchus with you*: But not on an embassy: Hipparchus had deserted to Octavian (ch. 67).
- 348. *She passed her own birthday ... and celebrated his ...* Antony's birthday was on 14 January, Cleopatra's evidently a little before.
- 349. *Agrippa, who kept writing from Rome ... urgently needed*: Agrippa had returned to Rome soon after Actium; Octavian had returned by the end of 31 BCE. There was trouble there, with veterans clamouring for release (CAH x2.61–2).
- 350. *Octavian ... Libya*: Octavian arrived before Alexandria in July 30 BCE, after a long march of over 1,000 miles. Cornelius Gallus had meanwhile taken over and perhaps strengthened the four legions commanded by Pinarius Scarpus (ch. 69 and n. 327) and occupied Paraetionium (n. 324).
- 351. *Pelusium*: See Map 4. Its commander Seleucus is not otherwise known.
- 352. *the Hippodrome of Alexandria*: Just east of the city. Antony's victory there was on 31 July 30 BCE.
- 353. *another challenge ... single combat*: The first was at ch. 62, before Actium. It was unrealistic even then.
- 354. *That evening ... the god Dionysus ... was now abandoning him*: This marvellous description (the inspiration for a famous poem of Cavafy) may reflect the Roman ritual of *evocatio*, where a besieging army would formally invite the gods of a city to come over and accept a new home at Rome. The rite was probably used

- before the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE, and it would have suited Octavian's style to revive it now (n. in Pelling, *LA*, *CAH* x2.63).
355. *As soon as it was light*: On 1 August 30 BCE.
356. *Cleopatra had betrayed him ... for her sake*: Dio 51.10 is explicit that Cleopatra 'caused the ships to desert': Plutarch again (cf. n. 346) leaves it more enigmatic whether Antony's suspicions are justified.
357. *He had long ago ... if the need arose*: Like Cassius's Pindarus (*Brut.* 43), or like Rhamnus in Parthia (ch. 48 and n. 238).
358. *suddenly turned away and killed himself*: Just as Brutus's friend Straton turned away at the moment of his death (*Brut.* 52).
359. *Those who were present say*: The present tense suggests an eyewitness source (Intro.).
360. *husband*: See n. 376.
361. *Proculeius*: C. Proculeius, an *eques* who was particularly trusted by Octavian. If this item is historical (it probably is not), Antony's trust was ill-placed (cf. chs. 78–9).
362. *fearful for the treasure*: Ch. 74.
363. *her children ... succeed to her kingdom*: The same request as before (ch. 72).
364. *Gallus*: C. Cornelius Gallus, the politician and poet, who had been commanding the force which attacked through Africa (n. 350).
365. *Areius the philosopher*: Areius Didymus, one of Octavian's teachers, a Stoic with Platonic leanings.
366. *the gymnasium*: The scene of Antony's display four years earlier (ch. 54 and n. 256). Octavian's entrance contrasts with Antony and Cleopatra's more exuberant manner, but is no less carefully staged.
367. *Philostratus*: Cf. *Cato* 57 and n. 308. He seems to have been a sort of court-philosopher, whose florid and unrestrained rhetoric was mocked as aping the lifestyle of the queen.
368. *the Academy*: Presumably the Athenian Academy (*Brut.* 2 and n. 19).
369. *'The wise ... truly wise'*: From an unknown tragedy.
370. *'Too many Caesars is no good thing ...'*: At *Iliad* 2.204 Odysseus warns that 'Too many leaders is no good thing: let there be only one leader, only one to rule.'
371. *Olympus ... published*: Possibly an important source for Plutarch (Intro.).
372. *She handed him a paper ... she had deceived him*: This whole episode is as enigmatic as the corresponding scene in Shakespeare's play (V.2.141–75). If Cleopatra has determined to die, why bother to steal away these trinkets? Has she therefore stage-managed the whole scene, including Seleucus's intervention,

to persuade Octavian that she wishes to live, and is this what Plutarch implies by his ‘the truth was that she had deceived him?’ (n. in Pelling, LA).

373. *Cornelius Dolabella*: Possibly the son of the consul of 44 (ch. 9 and n. 53).

374. *to be sent away*: To Rome, where they would appear as captives in Octavian’s triumph.

375. *the gods that dwell there*: Beautifully ambiguous: ‘there’ might indicate the gods of Rome (as opposed to those ‘here’ in Egypt, ch. 75), or the gods of the Underworld where Antony now dwells.

376. *your wife*: No mere ‘lover’ (ch. 53) now: cf. ch. 77 (‘husband’, n. 360) and Intro.

377. ‘*Charmion, is this well done?*’ In Greek, as in English, the ‘well done’ is the sort of language one might use casually to a servant. As such, it carries an eerie intensity here.

378. *According to one account ... what took place*: See n. in Pelling, LA. The version of snakebite is as early as Horace *Odes* 1.37 (c. 23 BCE), and, as Plutarch here says, is implied by the display at the triumph in 29; the alternative version of poison is also early (Strabo 17.1.10). Some of the details, e.g. the pinpricks on Cleopatra’s arm and Charmion’s tottering head, do capture genuine features of cobra-bite, and the double cobra was a royal symbol, rearing up in front of a monarch’s head-dress to strike enemies: if Cleopatra could now turn a real cobra on herself, it would be majestically appropriate.

379. *So died Cleopatra*: Probably 10 August 30 BCE.

380. *thirty-nine ... twenty-two ... more than fourteen*: The first two figures are right (n. 145), the third a mistake: if it refers back to the meeting at Tarsus (ch. 26), that was eleven years before.

381. *fifty-six ... fifty-three*: The second is more likely, in which case Antony was born on 14 January (n. 348) 83 BCE.

382. *seven children by his three wives*: By Fulvia, Antyllus and Iullus Antonius (n. 384); by Octavia, the elder and younger Antonia (n. 196); by Cleopatra, Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene and Ptolemy Philadelphus (n. 206).

383. *Juba, the king of Numidia*: Son of the Juba of *Cato* 56 (with n. 300), he was led in Caesar’s triumph in 46 BCE (*Caes.* 55), and was eventually restored first to Numidia and, in 25, Mauretania. He was a learned and prolific writer, and Plutarch may well have used him as a source for Roman antiquities.

384. *Antonius*: Iullus Antonius, who became consul in 10 BCE, was then involved in the disgrace of Julia (n. 387) and executed in 2 BCE.

385. *the sons of Livia*: Tiberius, the future emperor, and Nero Drusus (n. 390).

386. *a son ... named Marcellus*: M. Claudius Marcellus: born 42, married Julia in 25, died in 23. Virgil mourns him at *Aeneid* 6.860–86. For his father see nn. 23, 172.
387. *Octavian ... as his son*: Julia was born in 37 BCE, Octavian's daughter by his first wife Scribonia, so was eleven or twelve at the time of her marriage to Marcellus. Plutarch is wrong and Octavian did not 'adopt him as his son' at the same time. She married Agrippa in 21, then after Agrippa's death (12) Tiberius in 11. The scandal of her adulteries led to her exile in 2 BCE. She died in 14 CE. (By 24 BCE Octavian had taken the name 'Augustus', but the translation here keeps 'Octavian' to avoid confusion. The Greek simply has 'Caesar' throughout: cf. *Brut.* n. 132.)
388. *one of Octavia's daughters in marriage to Agrippa*: The elder Marcella.
389. *Domitius Ahenobarbus*: L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, son of the Ahenobarbus of this Life (n. 225), consul in 16 BCE.
390. *Antonia ... married Drusus*: Antonia's qualities suggest that she is her mother's daughter, just as Antony's qualities run in some of his male descendants. The husband is Nero Drusus, who died, much mourned, in 9 BCE.
391. *Germanicus*: He plays a starring role in the first two books of Tacitus's *Annals*: he died, even more mourned than his father, in 19 CE.
392. *Claudius later became emperor*: 41–54 CE.
393. *ruled in a crazed way*: The manuscripts have 'ruled conspicuously well', which cannot be right: the alteration of a single letter (*epifano*̄s to *epimano*̄s) gives this more satisfactory meaning. Gaius Caligula ruled 37–41 CE.
394. *Agrippina ... a son by Ahenobarbus*: The younger Agrippina plays a prominent role in Tac. *Ann.* 12–14. She was murdered in 59 CE. Her first husband was Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul 32 CE and son of the marriage of the elder Antonia and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus which Plutarch has just mentioned (n. 389). He has not made this stage of the descent clear.
395. *Agrippina ... became the consort of the emperor Claudius*: In 49 CE.
396. *Lucius Domitius was adopted by Claudius*: In 50 CE.
397. *Nero ... verge of destruction*: He ruled 54–68 CE. In a different frame of mind Plutarch could be more generous about Nero: at the end of *God's Slowness to Punish* he has a vision of Nero in Hell being spared some punishment 'because he had liberated Greece, the best nation among his subjects, and the one that the gods love best' (567e).
398. *fifth in descent from Antony*: Five generations through his mother (Antony, younger Antonia, Germanicus, Agrippina, Nero); only

four through his father (Antony, elder Antonia, Domitius, Nero).

Notes to the Comparison of Demetrius and Antony

1. *Antony's father ... hardly a man of war: Ant.* 1.
2. *push the barbarian tribes ... Caspian Sea: Ant.* 34 and n. 194.
3. *Phila as a bride ... ages: Demetr.* 14. He married Phila around 321–20 when he was about fourteen and she was about thirty.
4. *the Arsacid: I.e. the king of Parthia, Orodes and then Phraates (Ant. n. 208).*
5. *bringing freedom to Greece ... cities: Demetr.* 8–10, 15, 23.
6. *Brutus's body should be robed and buried: Ant.* 22.
7. *sent his prisoners back to Ptolemy ... gifts: Demetr.* 6.
8. *her mythical namesake:* The mythical Lamia was a child-destroying vampire figure, and the point here may simply be that her historical namesake, Demetrius' girlfriend, was also unpleasant and destructive (though if so it weakens the argument that Demetrius's sex-life was less damaging than Antony's). But Plutarch elsewhere quotes one bizarre myth which had the mythical Lamia taking out her eyes to sleep when at home and keeping them in a bucket, then putting them in when going out (*On Being a Busybody* 515f). That might be the point here: Demetrius at leisure might be 'half-asleep' just as the mythical Lamia might be blind, but both were thoroughly alert when going into public. If so, the point is decidedly over-compressed. For Lamia's role in the Life see *Demetr.* 16 and 27.
9. *did not go out to battle ... flower in bloom:* Perhaps already a hint of Homer's Paris, who comes from Helen's chamber into battle like a stallion 'glorying as he runs ... sure of his own magnificence ... bright in his armour like the beaming sun, and laughing as he came' (*Iliad* 6.506–14).
10. *'the minister of unholy Ares', as Euripides puts it: Fr. 992 K., from an unknown tragedy.*
11. *Never once ... indolence:* Similarly *Demetr.* 19, even though Demetrius came very close to being caught by the enemy with the beautiful Cratesipolis (ch. 9).
12. *Omphale taking away Heracles' club ... lion-skin:* As punishment for an act of treachery Heracles was said to have been enslaved by Zeus to Omphale, queen of Lydia, for a period: tales were told of the various acts of female submission he was forced to perform. The parallel between Omphale and Antony is also suggested by Prop. 3.11.17–20 and 29ff.: see J. Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (1985), pp. 33–5, relating it also to Propertius's use of Paris (2.3.35–8, 3.8.29–32) as a paradigm for his own naughtiness.

13. *the beaches around Canopus and Taphosiris*: Canopus was about 20 km north-east of Alexandria; by Taphosiris Plutarch probably means 'Taposiris Mikra', very close to Canopus, rather than 'Taposiris Megale' some way south-west of Alexandria.
14. *Paris fled into the bedchamber*: When whisked away by Aphrodite at *Iliad* 3.380–82.
15. *Antony's flight ... cost him his victory*: Not the impression left by the narrative of *Ant.* 62–6, where the desertions before the battle and the decision to fight on sea both create an anticipation of failure even before the battle begins.
16. *Demetrius's multiple marriages*: *Demetr.* 14 (though the emphasis there is not on the way he 'treated all his wives honourably' but on the insult to them of the king's taste for prostitutes), 25, 32, 45–6.
17. *two wives at the same time*: The narrative of *Antony* is more equivocal about this: 'he did not admit that she was his wife' (ch. 31), Octavia 'enjoyed the title of his wife: but Cleopatra ... had been content to be called his lover' (ch. 53), and it is only at the end that Cleopatra claims the title of 'wife' (*Ant.* 77, 84 and n. 376).
18. *drove out his wife ... lawfully married*: *Ant.* 57 and n. 274.
19. *the Parthenon*: That is, literally, 'the Temple of the Virgin' Athena, which makes Demetrius's behaviour all the more outrageous: the point is explicit at *Demetr.* 23–4, where the sexual excesses are described.
20. *he allowed ... the dreadful death ... violent lust*: Democles 'the beautiful', who plunged into a vat of boiling water to escape the king (*Demetr.* 24).
21. *Antony gave up his mother's brother ... murdering Cicero*: *Ant.* 20.
22. *Alexander*: Son of Cassander, killed by Demetrius in 294 BCE (*Demetr.* 36).
23. *abandoned ... by Artavasdes in Media*: *Ant.* 39 and 50.
24. *accusing the man he wronged ... wronging him*: At *Demetr.* 36 the emphasis rather falls on the way both Demetrius and Alexander were plotting equally against one another, so that Demetrius may seem to be acting in self-defence.
25. *Antony's finest ... victories ... not present himself*: *Ant.* 34.
26. *the Macedonians ... other side*: I.e. to Seleucus in 285 BCE (*Demetr.* 49).
27. *the other was the deserter ... for his sake*: *Ant.* 66–7.
28. *an extra three years devoted to stomach and to wine*: *Demetr.* 52. This judgement on Demetrius recalls the harsh verdict on Eumenes (*Comp. Sert.–Eum.* 2).
29. *he took himself off*: *Ant.* 76. Theatrical language (Intro.).

GALBA AND OTHO

Further Reading

E. G. Hardy's 1890 edition and commentary of *Galba* and *Otho* still has useful material: much more recent and more succinct is the edition (introduction, translation and notes) by D. Little and C. Ehrhardt (1994). Two recent Tacitus commentaries have much of value on Plutarch as well, on *Histories* 1 by Cynthia Damon (2003) and on *Histories* 2 by Rhiannon Ash (2007): these are cited in the notes in the simple form 'see Ash on' or 'see Damon on'. Among recent articles those of Rhiannon Ash and Elizabeth Keitel are particularly willing to give Plutarch scope for originality: Ash, 'Severed heads: individual portraits and irrational forces in Plutarch's *Galba* and *Otho*' in *Plutarch and his Intellectual World*, ed. J. Mossman (1997), pp. 189–214 (cited as 'Severed heads'); Keitel, 'Plutarch's tragedy tyrants: Galba and Otho', *Proceedings of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 8 (1995), 275–88 (cited as 'Plutarch's tyrants'); so is C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (1971), pp. 72–80. Book-length studies of the history of 69 CE include C. L. Murison, *Galba, Otho and Vitellius: Careers and Controversies* (1993) (cited as 'Murison, Galba'), K. Wellesley, *The Year of the Four Emperors* (3rd edn, 2000), and Gwyn Morgan, *69 AD: The Year of the Four Emperors* (2006). Ronald Syme's great work *Tacitus* (1958) has been very influential, but he underrates Plutarch's capacity for independent thought and technique; R. Martin, *Tacitus* (1981), is here more generous to Plutarch.

Notes to the Introduction to Galba and Otho

1. J. Geiger, 'Zum Bild Julius Caesars in der römischen Kaiserzeit', *Historia* 24 (1975), 444–53. Similarly R. Syme, 'Biographers of the Caesars', *Museum Helveticum* 37 (1980), 104–28 at 108: 'Nothing forbids the hypothesis that Plutarch composed his "Eight Caesars" in the aftermath of 96.'
2. Thus Jones, *P&R*, pp. 72–3; G. W. Bowersock, 'Vita Caesarum: remembering and forgetting the past' in *La Biographie Antique: Entretiens Hardt* 44 (1998), 193–210. 'Probably before 93' because this was the date of the exile of Iunius Mauricus: if Plutarch had known of that exile (not a certain inference), he might have thought it unwise to describe him as 'a man acknowledged to be of the highest qualities' (*Galb.* 8 and n. 55).
3. 'These products are not biographies ... Plutarch sliced up a narrative history,' Syme, *Museum Helveticum* 37 (1980), 104–5,

echoed by Morgan, 69 AD: *The Year of the Four Emperors*, p. 272. That goes too far.

4. Cf. *Galb.* n. 137.
5. It lists *Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus* as a single work; also *Agis and Cleomenes*. The regular pairs, e.g. *Theseus and Romulus* or *Demosthenes and Cicero*, are also listed as a single work apiece.
6. So A. Georgiadou, '*The Lives of the Caesars* and Plutarch's other *Lives*', *Illinois Classical Studies* 13.2 (1988), 349–56 at 350–51.
7. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 28, n. 47.
8. Ash, 'Severed heads', 189–92, lists further good anecdotes that Plutarch might have exploited and does not.
9. Thus Ash ('Severed Heads', 191), with the plausible explanation that 'Galba and Otho were engaging subjects for biography mainly because they both became *principes* in unusual circumstances, and not necessarily because they were intrinsically exciting individuals in their own right' (p. 192). The reason for thinking that *Augustus* was less austere is the gathering of fifteen of Augustus's *bons mots* in the *Apophthegmata of Kings and Generals* (206f–208a), a collection that elsewhere shows close overlap with the *Lives* – though the overlap in these cases is partly with the extant *Antony*, not (or as well as) with *Augustus*. But caution is advised: that collection may in part reflect notes taken by Plutarch for *Lives* rather than the *Lives* themselves (Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 65–90).
10. Jerome, *Commentary on Zechariah* 3.14.47 (Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 19).
11. This may explain why Plutarch chose to start the series with Augustus rather than, as Suetonius was to do a generation later, with Julius Caesar: it is Augustus who set the tone for the principate, even if Suetonius skilfully exploits Julius's career (and especially his mistakes) to introduce categories which will be relevant for the emperors as well. But it may also be that there was a general change in views of the principate at the time, with Julius, as the first Caesar, increasingly regarded as the founder of the system that bore his name: so Geiger, *Historia* 24 (1975), 444–53. Notice that later in the *Parallels* Plutarch himself seems to talk of Augustus as the second emperor, not the first: *Numa* 19. It is unlikely that any such change was immediate or totally clear-cut, but there may be something in this.
12. Ash, 'Severed heads'.
13. On Mestrius see Jones, *P&R*, pp. 11 n. 45, 22, 48–9.
14. One alternative explanation might be that Tacitus was using Plutarch. Possibly Tacitus did know Plutarch's account: on one occasion he may be correcting it, though if so the correction is

not particularly intelligent (*Galb.* 22 and n. 133: Jones, *P&R*, p. 78). But Tacitus is generally much fuller than Plutarch, and his additional detail looks too integrated to be simply a graft on to a framework drawn from Plutarch.

15. M. M. Sage, 'Tacitus' historical works: a survey and appraisal', *ANRW* ii.33.2 (1990), 851–1030, gives at 893–7 an overview of previous treatments. Like G. B. Townend ('Cluvius Rufus in the *Histories* of Tacitus', *American Journal of Philology* 85 (1964), 337–77), Sage thinks Pliny is the likeliest candidate. Damon has a useful appendix listing 'parallel passages showing strong verbal similarities' in her comm. on *Hist.* 1 (pp. 291–301).
16. *Otho* 9 ~ Tac. *Hist.* 2.37–8 (more on this later in the Intro.).
17. Cluvius used in Tacitus: *Ann.* 13.20, 14.2. Cluvius including Verginius Rufus: Pliny *Ep.* 9.19.5. Syme (*Tacitus*, pp. 179, 675) prefers to think that Cluvius ended either with the death of Nero or the end of the year 68 CE. That would imply that the story of *Otho* 3 – Otho using 'Nero' in imperial dispatches – was told under Nero's reign: not impossible, but not likely. On Cluvius see D. Wardle, 'Cluvius Rufus and Suetonius', *Hermes* 120 (1992), 466–82.
18. Pliny used and criticized by Tac. *Ann.* 13.20, 15.53; *Hist.* 3.27
19. Fabius on Nero: Tac. *Ann.* 13.20, 14.2, 15.60.
20. E.g. Vipstanus Messalla, cited at Tac. *Hist.* 3.25 and 28, or an (unattested) work by Marius Celsus (*Galb.* n. 158): Syme, *Tacitus*, pp. 176–81, 674–6.
21. Syme (*Tacitus*, p. 181) assumes that the quotation is second-hand, and it was the unidentified source that quoted Cluvius; he makes the same assumption about the citation of Julius Secundus at *Otho* 9.
22. Thus Damon on *Hist.* 1.78, suggesting that Tacitus is deliberately playing down Otho's 'Neronian' platform, perhaps reserving the theme to make more of it with Vitellius (*Hist.* 2.95.1).
23. Syme, *Tacitus*, pp. 674–6.
24. Borrowed epigrammatic formulations include 'asking whether we will stay loyal to Nero is not the behaviour of the loyal', *Galb.* 4 with n. 31; 'He was fearful for his guests, they were fearful of him', *Otho* 3 with n. 15; 'your uncle was a Caesar: that is one thing never wholly to forget, and never to remember too well', *Otho* 16 and n. 83.
25. Systems of images: *Galb.* 23 and n. 141, 26 and nn. 163, 166, 168. In *the Parallel Lives*: Intro. *Ant.*
26. On this see Ash, 'Severed heads', 200–202, relating this also to the tearing limb from limb of the end of *Galb.* 8; Keitel, 'Plutarch's tyrants'.

27. The Tacitus commentaries of Damon (*Hist.* 1) and Ash (*Hist.* 2) give particular attention to comparing the two accounts: cf. Damon pp. 18–30, 291–302 and Ash pp. 29–32 for summaries. Among other treatments Keitel, ‘Plutarch’s tyrants’, and Martin, *Tacitus*, pp. 189–98, are especially helpful.
28. As Jones observed, *P&R*, p. 74. Syme (*Tacitus*, p. 181) here misjudges: ‘[t]he Greek biographer was constrained to follow the source fairly closely – though he might abbreviate, he could not transmute, it was beyond his capacity, and not his intention’.
29. Vinius: *Galb.* 4, 10–12, 16–17, 20–21, 25–8, and n. 65. Laco: *Galb.* 13, 27, 29, and nn. 71, 123, 142, 177. Marius Celsus: *Galb.* 25, 27, and nn. 158, 159; *Otho* 1, 5, 7–8, 13, and nn. 28, 66. Valens: *Galb.* 10, 15, 22, and n. 59; *Otho* 5–7, and nn. 23, 35. Caecina: *Otho* 5–6, 10–11, and n. 23. Suetonius Paulinus: *Otho* 5, 7–8, 11, 13, and n. 28. Proculus: *Otho* 7–8, 11, 13, and nn. 41–2.
30. Verginius Rufus: *Galb.* 6, 10, 18, 22 and nn. 38–9, 62; *Otho* 1, 19, and nn. 84, 93. On Galba’s nostalgia for his previous inactivity see *Galb.* 7: notice his particular reverence for his ancestor Catulus, ‘a man who outstripped all his contemporaries in virtue and reputation but willingly allowed others to acquire greater power’ (*Galb.* 3 and n. 18). On this see Keitel, ‘Plutarch’s tyrants’, 280–81.
31. C. Gill, ‘The question of character-development: Plutarch and Tacitus’, *CQ* 33 (1983,) 469–87, discusses the ways that both Plutarch and Tacitus address this possibility of character-change. Admittedly, Plutarch found changes for the worse more problematic and thought-provoking than changes for the better, and Otho’s would be for the better.
32. They are the theme of an outstanding modern treatment of the *Histories*, R. Ash’s *Ordering Anarchy* (1999): that book’s sub-title is *Armies and Leaders in Tacitus’s Histories*.
33. ‘The consular historian blights and withers these ingenuous and fanciful speculations’, Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 185.
34. *Otho* 5 and n. 28 (see also nn. 39, 44, 55, 64).
35. Cf. also Ash on *Hist.* 2.37–8.
36. Just as, in a different way, Galba had too, aspiring ‘to take the people who had been spoilt by Tigellinus and Nymphidius and rule them in the manner that Scipio and Fabricius and Camillus had ruled the Romans of their own day’ (*Galb.* 29). But Galba’s end encourages no such thoughts of what might have been, and there the comparison with the Republican past is Plutarch’s own, not his speaker’s.
37. Cf. *Otho* 15, 16, 17, and nn. 77, 84 and 86.

Notes to Galba

1. *Iphicrates of Athens*: A respected and enterprising general of the first half of the fourth century BCE; many of his successes were achieved with mercenaries.
2. *Aemilius Paullus* ... 'leave the rest to me': Plutarch's formulation is crisper here than at *Aem.* 13 or Livy's version at 44.34. The story relates to 168 BCE.
3. *Plato saw ... spirited vigour*: A summary of the argument of much of the first half of the *Republic*, where 'spirit' (Greek *to thumoeides*, the same word as here) is the distinctive part of the soul which corresponds to the military arm of the state. The Platonic theme is important (Intro.).
4. *Demades*: This Athenian statesman is a major figure in *Phocion*, where his non-confrontational policy towards Alexander is a foil for that of Phocion himself. At *On the Fortune of Alexander* 336f Plutarch attributes the comparison with the blinded Cyclops to Leosthenes, but 'Demades' seems right: so also [Demetrius] *De Elocutione* 284. Perhaps both statesmen used it.
5. *the blinded Cyclops*: As described at *Odyssey* 9.371–419, esp. 415–19.
6. *the legendary sufferings ... of the Titans*: The ten-year war between Titans and Olympians is described at Hesiod *Theogony* 617–735.
7. *a man of Pherae*: Presumably Polyphron, brother of Jason of Pherae, who ruled for less than a year after the death of Jason and his other brother Polydorus in 370 BCE (Xen. *Hellenica* 6.4.33–5). Ziegler adds the name of 'Polyphron' to the text here: that is possible, but not certain.
8. *he was dubbed 'the theatrical tyrant' by Dionysius*: Presumably Dionysius I of Syracuse, and presumably Plutarch is right to find the point of the joke in the speed with which he came on and off the stage, not in anything more 'tragic' (cf. Intro.).
9. *played host to four successive emperors ... that*: A good line, but it is not quite clear which four Plutarch means, Nero-Galba-Otho-Vitellius or Galba-Otho-Vitellius-Vespasian; 'played host to' is not quite right in either case, as Vitellius did not reach Rome till July 69 CE, thirteen months after Nero's death, and Vespasian did not arrive until over a year after Galba's overthrow. But probably the crucial dates are those when each man's principate was established, i.e. either 9 June 68 (death of Nero) to 16 April 69 (death of Otho) or 15 January 69 (death of Galba) to 20 December 69 (death of Vitellius).
10. *Nymphidius Sabinus*: C. Nymphidius Sabinus had become co-prefect of the praetorian guard with Tigellinus in 65 CE. For his

actions in 68 and his death see chs. 8–9 and 13–14.

11. *as I have already mentioned*: Evidently in the lost *Nero*: Plutarch envisages the *Lives of the Caesars* as a single work (Intro.).
12. *Tigellinus*: Ofonius Tigellinus, prefect of the praetorian guard since 62 BCE. He had accompanied Nero in his Greek tour of 66–8, and so Nymphidius was presumably in sole control of the praetorians for that period.
13. *it was clear that Nero ... to Egypt*: Plutarch introduces this abruptly, but had presumably said more in *Nero*. These Egyptian plans are mentioned by Dio 63.27 ('to kill the senators, burn down the city, and sail to Alexandria') and Suet. *Nero* 47 ('to be allowed to become Prefect of Egypt').
14. *the so-called 'Palace' and 'Praetorian' guard*: 'Palace' and 'Praetorian' may be alternative names for the praetorians, or may reflect an original which specified 'urban cohorts' and 'praetorian guard'. The two bodies of troops were often referred to as one, not unreasonably as they were quartered together on the outskirts of the city and operated similarly (see Damon on *Hist.* 1.4.2).
15. *He promised ... apiece*: Large sums, certainly, but not out of keeping with the past. For the levels offered during the triumviral period cf. *Ant.* 16 and n. 102 there; Claudius rewarded the praetorians on accession with either 3,750 or 5,000 drachmas/denarii, and Nero paid the same; and as Little–Ehrhardt observe it was a riskier business to desert an established emperor than to confirm a new one. Plutarch here pre-empts the narrative of ch. 8: in effect chs. 1–2 combine to form a prologue, emphasizing the theme of corruptible soldiery, before reverting to the beginning of the biographical narrative in ch. 3.
16. *appropriate for a pragmatic history ... sufferings of the Caesars*: See Intro.
17. *The house of the Servii*: The praenomen Servius was practically limited to the Sulpicii, so that 'Servii' can be used effectively as a synonym for 'Sulpicii', here and at *Rom.* 12 and Tac. *Hist.* 2.48. Particularly striking ancestors were the orator Servius Sulpicius Galba, an opponent of Aemilius Paullus (*Aem.* 30) and of the elder Cato (*Elder Cato* 15, 28); the man of the same name who was a legate of Sulla (*Sull.* 17); and the legate of Caesar in Gaul (*Caes. BG* 3.1–6, etc.). Galba's father also reached the consulship (22 CE).
18. *Catulus*: Q. Lutatius Catulus, the consul of 78 BCE (see *Cato* 16 and n. 69). Galba's mother Mummia was daughter of Lutatia, the daughter of Catulus, and so Galba was Catulus's great-grandson. Like Brutus (*Brut.* 1 and n. 6) Galba took such things seriously: Suet. *Galb.* 2 says that the emperor made a point of noting the

Catulus ancestry on his inscriptions, and that he displayed a family tree in his hall tracing his ancestry back to Jupiter and to Pasiphae. There is point in recalling this ‘man who outstripped all his contemporaries in virtue and reputation but willingly allowed others to acquire greater power’: that was the choice that Galba seemed to have made too, but then in old age catastrophically reversed (cf. Intro. and n. 30 there).

19. *some family relationship with ... Livia*: Probably a mistake: Suet. *Galb.* 2 is explicit that Galba had no family connection with the imperial house. It conceivably arose from Galba’s adoption by a different Livia, Livia Ocellina (before becoming emperor his formal name was, it seems, L. Livius Ocella Sulpicius Galba), and/or it may represent an overstatement of the favour which Livia seems to have shown him (next n.). The mistake seems to underlie the rhetoric of ch. 14, ‘Are we to ... get rid of the child of Livia’s blood the way we got rid of the child of Agrippina?’ (n. 81).
20. *enter ... from the Palace*: Another mistake or misunderstanding: Galba’s first consulship was in 33 CE, but Livia had died in 29. Still, he may well have been a favourite of Livia’s – Suet. *Galb.* 5 says that Livia treated Galba generously in her will – and this may explain the rare distinction noted here, along with the further honour of being *consul ordinarius* (i.e. taking up office on 1 January and giving his name to the year) rather than *suffectus* (for some later months). A consul would normally set out from his own house to take up his office. As emperor Galba issued coins celebrating DIVA AUGUSTA (Murison, *Galba*, p. 55).
21. *army commander in Germany*: I.e. Upper Germany, in 39–41 or 42 CE. More on this at Suet. *Galb.* 6 and Dio 60.8.7 (a victory over the Chatti).
22. *proconsul of Africa*: From 44 or 45 CE for two years. More at Suet. *Galb.* 7, noting also (ch. 8) that Galba was rewarded for his service in Germany and Africa by triumphal regalia and various priesthoods.
23. *Spain*: Nearer Spain, by now renamed as ‘Tarraconensis’. Galba took up the province in 60 CE.
24. *his advanced age*: If he was seventy-two years old in January 69 CE (n. 49), he was presumably sixty-three when he took up his province.
25. *There was nothing ... sold into slavery*: Procurators, who technically managed the emperor’s financial interests in a province, acquired considerable independent power, and Tacitus mentions ‘friction with procurators’ as one of the typical signs of provincial malaise from which Agricola was free (*Agr.* 9): cf. the case of Iulius

Classicianus in Britain (Tac. *Ann.* 14.38). It may well be that Galba could do little to stop them, though the idea that Galba's show of sympathy afforded some consolation seems over-rosy: elsewhere Plutarch is more hard-headed in his comments on Roman maladministration (cf. *Brut.* 6 and n. 49; General Intro. IV).

26. *this increased his popularity still more*: Suet. *Galb.* 9 gives a much less favourable version of the proconsulship, describing how he governed the province 'in an inconsistent manner', at first unduly severe and then slothful. That may well reflect anti-Galba propaganda, while Plutarch's version reflects his normal readiness to do his moral best for his subjects (General Intro. II).
27. *Julius Vindex ... rose against Nero*: March 68 CE. Vindex was governor of one of the Gallic provinces, but it is not clear which: perhaps Belgica rather than (as usually assumed) Lugdunensis, perhaps even Narbonensis (thus A. N. Sherwin-White in his commentary (1966) on Pliny *Ep.* 6.10.4)
28. *letters reached him ... rebellion became open*: Suet. *Galb.* 9 says that the first Galba heard of it was in letters from the governor of Aquitania asking for assistance against Vindex; then came the letters from Vindex himself.
29. *the position of leader*: Carefully phrased: the Greek word might most naturally mean 'the principate', but could carry a less charged sense for anyone who thought in more Republican terms. The same is true of the final sentence of this chapter, and both prepare for Galba's own equivocation when acclaimed as emperor in ch. 5.
30. *Titus Vinius ... general's legion*: Galba had only the single legion in Spain. On Vinius see chs. 11–12 and n. 65.
31. *Asking ... behaviour of the loyal*: Or, as Tacitus's Mucianus puts it more pungently when urging on Vespasian, 'those who deliberate are already in revolt' (*Hist.* 2.77). It may be that one or other author has transferred the epigram to a new context and speaker: if so, it is probably Tacitus, who had no plans to treat Vindex's revolt in the *Histories*, rather than Plutarch, who could have left it for Mucianus in his *Vitellius*.
32. *you as their leader*: See n. 29. Vinius's rhetoric is presumably sarcastic, but the alternative course – treating Vindex as their enemy – was the one in fact taken by the army of Verginius (n. 38) in ch. 7; their resentment at their subsequent treatment is later traced (chs. 18 and 22, and nn. 106 and 130).
33. *This led Galba ... freedom*: So also Suet. *Galb.* 10, making it clearer that this promise to manumit slaves was just an excuse for a public gathering. Still, accusations that enemies were stirring up

slaves were regularly made, and this may reflect anti-Galba propaganda alleging a genuine programme of freeing slaves. Plutarch makes little of it. He could have done more, though, to favour Galba: Suet. *Galb.* 9 has a story that he intercepted letters from Nero ordering his own death (cf. Murison, *Galba*, p. 39).

34. *everyone ... hailed him as emperor*: Probably 3 April 68 CE.
35. *listing the most distinguished ... with grief*: According to Suet. *Galb.* 10 he displayed their wax images, and also paraded 'a boy of noble family whom he had brought from his place of exile in the nearby Balearic Islands'.
36. *the emperor had been pretending ... reclining*: Suet. *Nero* also gives an impression of initial insouciance (ch. 40: so also Dio 63.26) followed by a strong reaction when news of Galba arrived (ch. 42); but he has the table overturned at a later stage, when Nero heard of the secession of other armies (ch. 47).
37. *Clodius Macer in Africa*: L. Clodius Macer, legionary commander in Africa. He issued coins proclaiming liberty; there were fears he might cut off Rome's corn-supply (cf. ch. 13), and he raised a further legion. He was eventually executed on Galba's orders in October 68 CE (ch. 15).
38. *Verginius Rufus, commander of the German army in Gaul*: L. Verginius Rufus, consul in 63 CE and now commander of the three legions in Upper Germany.
39. *the armies ... Vindex*: At the battle of Vesontio (modern Besançon), May 68 CE. It was thought that Vindex and Verginius Rufus might themselves have come to some understanding against Nero (Dio 63. 24–5), had not the armies forced the issue. Verginius's actions and intentions are still much debated. The image of the 'charioteers who had lost control of their horses' echoes a famous passage of Plato (*Phaedrus* 254e), and continues the Platonic theme of ch. 1 (cf. Intro.).
40. *Clunia*: Modern Coruña del Conde, a strong defensive position.
41. *full of remorse ... avoiding involvement*: Suet. *Galb.* 11 says he considered suicide.
42. *from Rome ... Icelus*: Icelus (n. 47) arrived on 15 or 16 June 68 CE.
43. *When Nero was still alive ... Nero was dead*: More detail at Suet. *Nero* 47–9. Nero died on 9 June 68 CE.
44. *he had gone to see the body ... before he had left*: According to Suet. *Nero* 49 Icelus himself gave orders for its cremation.
45. *someone else*: The text is here defective and a name has fallen out. Some editors restore 'T. Vinus' (n. 65), but this is unlikely: it is improbable that Vinus had been in Rome.
46. *presented Icelus with golden rings*: That is, not merely gave him the rings but also the right to wear them, which signified equestrian

- status: that also explains his new name Marcianus, as Tac. *Hist.* 1.13.1 makes clear (see Damon's n. on that passage).
47. *Icelus ... most powerful of the freedmen*: Suet. *Galb.* 14 and Tac. *Hist.* 1.13 (and also in Otho's speech at 1.37) agree on Icelus's power (nn. 123, 159). He was executed on Galba's fall (*Hist.* 1.46).
 48. *Nymphidius Sabinus*: Ch. 2 and n. 10.
 49. *He was a man of seventy-three years*: This was the canonical figure for Galba's age, but it varies between 'seventy-three years old' and 'in his seventy-third year', and also between his age at proclamation in 68 CE and at death on 15 January 69. Dio 64.6.5 is likely to be right in putting his age at death as 72 years 23 days, which gives a birth date of 20 December 5 BCE. In that case he was now seventy-one.
 50. *co-prefect Tigellinus*: I.e. co-prefect of the praetorian guard (ch. 2 and n. 12).
 51. *'diplomas'*: Permits to use the *cursus publicus* or public post. Their use and abuse by officials was a sensitive subject (Pliny *Ep.* 10.45–6, 120–21).
 52. *gruesome execution*: Literally 'impaling on a plank': the Greek word (*apotumpanizein*) can also be used of crucifixion. The examples that follow suggest that it is anyway being used more generally here.
 53. *Spiculus*: Mentioned by Suet. *Nero* 30.2 as a favourite of Nero who was lavishly rewarded and at 47.3 as present at his suicide. He may be the same as a Ti. Claudius Spiculus (the name indicates a freedman) mentioned in an inscription as a householder at Antium, a 'Spiculus' who appears on a tombstone as one of Nero's bodyguard, and/or a 'Scipulus' who appears as 'a commander of the camp' killed by praetorians in a garbled version of Dio (68.27b, transmitted by John of Antioch).
 54. *a sycophantic prosecutor*: That is, one of the *delatores*, who made a practice of self-serving prosecutions, reflecting or fuelling the emperor's disfavour with individuals. Aponius is not otherwise known.
 55. *Mauricus*: Presumably Iunius Mauricus, exiled under Domitian (Tac. *Agr.* 45.1) and brother of the Arulenus Rusticus who was executed for his laudatory work on Thrasea Paetus (*Agr.* 2.1). Mauricus belonged to the circle of high-principled opposition to autocratic excesses (the so-called 'Stoic' or 'philosophical opposition'), and his point carried extra bite if his enthusiasm for Nero's victim Thrasea was already known. This reference may be important for the dating of the work (Intro. n. 2).
 56. *did not object ... son of Gaius Caesar*: Put more strongly by Tac.

Ann. 15.72: 'he claimed to be the son of Gaius Caesar'. Tacitus suggests a closer physical similarity than Plutarch.

57. *Callistus*: Prominent under both Gaius – he played a leading part in his assassination – and, esp., Claudius.
58. *Sporus ... Poppaea*: Nero too had made a show of treating Sporus as his wife (Suet. *Nero* 28–9). He had been with Nero to the end (Suet. *Nero* 48–9), and 'from the pyre' may even be right. On Poppaea see ch. 19 and n. 113.
59. *Fabius Valens*: Tacitus summarizes his character at *Hist.* 3.62: 'dissolute and not without ability, he had sought a reputation for sophistication through the practice of excess'. For his later actions cf. chs. 15, 22 and n. 138, *Otho* 6 and n. 35. He later turned against Galba, urging first Verginius and then Vitellius to depose him. He fought well for Vitellius at Bedriacum, and was suffect consul in autumn 69 CE; later he was captured and executed.
60. *Hordeonius Flaccus ... handed over his forces*: Verginius's troops in Upper Germany took the change of command less well (Tac. *Hist.* 1.9 speaks of their contempt for Flaccus, 'this gout-ridden old man, lacking in resolution and authority'; cf. ch. 18). Flaccus retained his command under Vitellius and Vespasian, but his actions in the war were weak and undistinguished, and he was eventually killed by his own men (*Hist.* 4.36).
61. *Titus Vinius*: See chs. 4, 11–12 and n. 65.
62. *Verginius's guardian angel ... old age full of peace and calm*: Cf. Intro. Verginius lived on to hold a further consulship in 97 CE, and so he was probably still alive when Plutarch was writing. He died later in 97. Tacitus gave his funeral oration, and Pliny writes appreciatively about him in *Ep.* 6.10, 9.19.
63. *near the Gallic city of Narbo*: As Little–Ehrhardt point out, Galba was not hurrying: the emissaries might have expected to meet him further east than Narbo (modern Narbonne), as they had travelled almost twice the distance from Rome that he had covered from Clunia. There is point in their encouragement to appear quickly in the city.
64. *under the influence of Vinius*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.12 similarly mentions Vinius's growing power and the resentment it caused.
65. *Vinius ...*: Cf. the memorable obituary given by Tac. *Hist.* 1.48, telling the same stories of Calvisius's wife and Claudius's dinner-party. Tacitus however adds more recent details of his public life: 'He governed Gallia Narbonensis with strictness and honesty, then was soon catapulted into danger by the friendship of Galba. He was enterprising, shrewd, ready for action and – depending on whether he applied himself – degraded or energetic, and in each case to the same degree.' On his later activities and death cf. chs.

16–17, 20–21, 25–8.

- 66. *Calvisius Sabinus*: The consul of 26 CE, then governor of Pannonia.
- 67. *the 'principia', as the Romans put it*: A strange piece of pedantry, on the face of it, interrupting a good story. Possibly the name underlines that they were misbehaving on the commander's own ground.
- 68. *the emperor Gaius sent him to prison*: Vinius fared better than his commander and his lover: according to Dio 59.18, Calvisius and his wife Cornelia were both denounced before Gaius for her over-familiar behaviour in camp, and they killed themselves. It may well be that they were Gaius's real targets, and the scandal with Vinius a trumped-up or exaggerated charge.
- 69. *a silver goblet*: 'Golden' according to Tac. *Hist.* 1.48 and Suet. *Divus Claudius* 32.
- 70. *Gellianus ... spy on Galba*: Ch. 9.
- 71. *Cornelius Laco*: Linked with Vinius by Tacitus at *Hist.* 1.6 as the 'laziest man alive' while Vinius was the 'worst'. He was an equestrian on Galba's staff in Spain. He figures prominently in *Hist.* 1, meeting his death at 1.46 as Galba falls. Plutarch makes little of him (nn. 123, 142, 177), but his disastrous influence is taken as read at the end (ch. 29).
- 72. *the palace and bodyguard troops*: Similar language to ch. 2, and like that referring to the praetorian guard and perhaps the urban cohorts (n. 14). Nymphidius was himself praetorian prefect. Cornelius Laco was presumably being appointed – or so Gellianus reported – either to replace him or as co-prefect, replacing Tigellinus (ch. 2 and nn. 10, 12, ch. 8 and n. 50).
- 73. *Clodius Macer*: Ch. 6 and n. 37.
- 74. *scaremongering letters ... Judaea*: The irony is that all these 'scares' turn out to be justified, one by one (just as Nymphidius was right in warning of the influence of Vinius and Laco, cf. chs. 17 and 29): Clodius might well have cut off the corn-supply (n. 37), the instability would be the end of Galba, Vitellius's German legions would overthrow Otho and the legions from Syria and Judaea would install Vespasian.
- 75. *Clodius Celsus from Antioch*: Otherwise unknown.
- 76. *Mithridates of Pontus*: He became king in 41 CE, then was brought to Italy in 49. We do not know anything of him between 49 and 68: he may have been in the custody of Nymphidius as praetorian prefect (Little-Ehrhardt). Ch. 15 tells of his death.
- 77. *So the decision ... declare him emperor*: Ch. 14 is the fullest account we have of the death of Nymphidius. Plutarch tells it well: notice in particular the use of direct speech, a rare feature in his work (Ti. *Gracch.* 9 with n. 44), and one he reserves for passages of

intense involvement. It fits his emphasis on the power that the military was exercising and the violence with which they were exercising it (ch. 1; General Intro. IV and Intro. *Galba–Otho*); for the moment, though, it is in the interest of loyalty, and to eliminate a villain.

78. *Antonius Honoratus*: Not otherwise known.
79. *killed his mother or murdered his wife?* As Nero had ordered the deaths of his mother Agrippina in 59 CE (Tac. *Ann.* 14.1–9) and his wife Octavia in 62 (*Ann.* 14.63–4).
80. *we believed Nymphidius ... taken flight to Egypt*: Ch. 2.
81. *the child of Livia's blood*: This seems to build on the misunderstanding of ch. 3, where Plutarch talks of 'some family relationship with Augustus's wife Livia' (n. 19). Galba's mother was in fact Mummia (n. 18).
82. *good and faithful protectors*: This picks up on the formal role of the praetorians to act as the emperor's guard.
83. *Cingonius Varro*: Designated by Nero suffect consul for 68 CE. See ch. 15 for his fate.
84. *Cingonius ... Mithridates of Pontus*: See chs. 14 with previous n. and 13 with n. 76 respectively. Tacitus also mentions the death of Cingonius, along with that of Petronius Turpilianus, as part of the murderous accompaniment of Galba's journey (*Hist.* 1.6).
85. *Petronius Turpilianus ... loyal to Nero*: Consul in 61 CE, then governor of Britain. He had commanded the troops whom Nero had mustered in his final defence, but could not prevent their defection (Dio 63.27.1a, giving the impression that Petronius too had declared for Galba: that is uncertain). Ch. 17 indicates that Vinus was now responsible for his death.
86. *Macer ... Trebonius*: For Clodius Macer see ch. 6 and n. 37. Trebonius Garutianus was procurator in Africa, as Tac. *Hist.* 1.7 makes clear.
87. *Fonteius ... Valens*: Fonteius Capito was consul in 67 CE, then governed Lower Germany in 67–8. For Valens see ch. 10 and n. 59. Tac. *Hist.* 1.7.1–2 indicates that a certain Cornelius Aquinus was also involved in Capito's killing, that they killed Capito without orders from Galba and that Capito may have been innocent (see Damon's nn.).
88. *within 25 stades of the city*: About 3 miles (probably the figure that would have been given in a Latin source). This took place at the Milvian Bridge (Tac. *Hist.* 1.87).
89. *the men ... a single unit*: I.e. the so-called *classica legio*, recruited as Plutarch says from the fleet to serve a soldiers. Plutarch may have mentioned this in *Nero* (Intro.).
90. *Galba ... approach him later*: Suet. *Galb.* 12 says that Galba tried to

force them back to their former status as rowers, and adds that after the cavalry charge he decimated (i.e. executed one in ten) of the survivors. Tac. *Hist.* 1.37.3 also mentions the decimation. Nevertheless, an inscription shows that he granted some an honourable discharge on 22 December.

91. *a few gold pieces*: 5 denarii, according to Suet. *Galb.* 12, which would be much less (n. 125). Plutarch tells another story of Canus at *Should an Old Man Take Part in Public Life?* 786a: he remarked that his playing gave so much more pleasure to himself than to others that, if they only realized it, they should have expected him to pay them rather than the other way round. The two stories may go together, as Canus's remark would be a tactful way of answering anyone who asked if he had taken offence at Galba's meanness.
92. *As for the gifts ... retained*: More on this at Tac. *Hist.* 1.20 and Suet. *Galb.* 15, including the establishment of a commission of thirty (Tac.) or fifty (Suet.) *equites* to conduct the investigation. Tacitus says that over 2 billion sesterces had been spent.
93. *Hesiod's advice ... nearly gone*: *Works and Days* 368, adding that you should 'drink sparingly in between'.
94. *a victim more than a wrongdoer*: As he had claimed years before in Spain (ch. 4 and n. 25). But this time it was more serious, and not much consolation to those who suffered.
95. *Helius ... Patrobius*: A rogues' gallery of obnoxious freedmen: there are similar but not identical lists at Dio 64.3.3 and Tac. *Hist.* 2.95. Helius was procurator in Asia at the time of Nero's accession, and was instrumental in getting rid of Silanus, supposedly a potential rival (Tac. *Ann.* 13.1); his power persisted through the reign. Polyclitus had been sent on a mission to Britain in 61 CE, among much pomp (*Ann.* 14.39); then he and Helius exercised great and pernicious influence in Italy during Nero's time in Greece in 67 (Dio 63.12). Patrobius had put on a luxurious show at Puteoli to honour the Parthian king Tiridates in 66 (see ch. 28 and n. 185 for his slaves' grisly and vengeful treatment of Galba's corpse). Petinus is more obscure.
96. *Tigellinus*: Ch. 2 and n. 12. Tigellinus's escape was short-lived (*Otho* 2).
97. *Turpilianus ... crimes*: Ch. 15 and n. 85.
98. *an edict from the emperor*: Also mentioned by Suet. *Galb.* 15.
99. *a terminal wasting illness*: This part is not fabrication, or was at least taken by Plutarch as genuine (*Otho* 2).
100. *a widow*: Her name was Crispina, and she was mentioned as a possible match for Otho (ch. 21). It was she who buried her father's body (ch. 28). Tac. *Hist.* 1.13 describes her as *uidua*,

which may mean ‘divorced’ or even, rarely, ‘unmarried’ as well as ‘widowed’: possibly Plutarch has mistranslated the Latin word, but we do not know her marital status and he may be right.

101. *silver pieces*: A silver piece = 1 drachma/denarius = 4 sesterces.
102. *freedom from tribute ... citizenship*: Also mentioned at ch. 22 (n. 130) and Tac. *Hist.* 1.8 and 51.4 (see Damon’s nn.: not all Gaul received these concessions).
103. *would at least match what Nero had given*: For the city troops, the promise had been 7,500 denarii (ch. 2); ‘what Nero had given’ on accession was 3,750 or 5,000 denarii (ch. 2 and n. 15).
104. *his practice was to enlist troops ... not to buy them*: ‘A remark that was honourable from the viewpoint of the state, but dangerous for the man himself’ (Tac. *Hist.* 1.5). It was famous, and is also recounted by Suet. *Galb.* 16.1 (‘he kept saying this’) and Dio 64.3.
105. *their battle with Vindex*: Ch. 6.
106. *the troops in Germany ... difficult to command*: These are the armies of Upper Germany. Tac. *Hist.* 1.9, 51 and Suet. *Galb.* 16.2 make similar comments, with Tacitus in particular giving further reasons for their unrest: their awareness that they had been slow in declaring for Galba, their support for Verginius and their concern at his treatment, their indignation at the execution of Fonteius Capito (even if it was deserved). Cf. esp. chs. 6, 10–11, 15, and nn. 32, 38–9, 60, 87.
107. *Flaccus*: Ch. 10 and n. 60.
108. *legions under Vitellius*: I.e. those of Lower Germany: Galba had entrusted Vitellius with that command (Tac. *Hist.* 1.9, Suet. *Vit.* 7). ‘Vitellius’ is an emendation, and the manuscripts have ‘Tigellinus’: the emendation is not totally secure, as Tac. *Hist.* 1.14 is explicit that no news had yet arrived about unrest in Vitellius’s legions, but ‘the legions under Tigellinus’ would be an impossible way to refer to the praetorians.
109. *letters were sent to Galba by his procurators*: Probably generalizing from the single case of the letter sent by Pompeius Propinquus, procurator in Northern Gaul (Tac. *Hist.* 1.12). If so, this was later, following the mutiny on 1 January 69 CE (n. 140).
110. *not just age ... childlessness ... causing the disrespect*: Similar language at Suet. *Galb.* 17.1. Tac. *Hist.* 1.12 agrees that Galba had been ‘thinking about adoption’ for some time: chs. 22–3 in turn agree with Tacitus and Suetonius that news of the mutiny on 1 January 69 CE made the final decision urgent.
111. *There was a man called Marcus Otho*. On the placing of this introduction see Intro. Much of the material on Otho is similar to Suet. *Otho* 3 and Tac. *Hist.* 1.13 and *Ann.* 13.45–6, though Tacitus’s two passages are not wholly in agreement with one

- another (cf. n. 116). Perhaps Tacitus discovered better information after writing his *Histories* and before the *Annals*.
112. *'the husband of fair-tressed Helen': Iliad 3.329*, and on five other occasions in the Homeric poems.
 113. *Poppaea*: Poppaea Sabina, who eventually married Nero and bore him a daughter, Claudia, in 63 CE; the child died aged four months. In 65 Poppaea died, allegedly after being kicked by Nero when pregnant again. She was given divine honours. Evidently she would have figured prominently in *Nero*.
 114. *Crispinus*: Rufius Crispinus was praetorian prefect under Claudius. He was exiled in 65 CE and ordered to kill himself in 66 (Tac. *Ann.* 15.71, 16.17). He and Poppaea had a son, whom Nero killed. Presumably Plutarch has already recounted Nero's affair with Poppaea in *Nero*, and this may be a resumé of that passage: hence the casualness with which Crispinus is mentioned.
 115. *treating his own wife ... his mother*: Tac. *Ann.* 14.1 similarly links the elimination of Octavia and Agrippina (n. 79) with the progress of the Poppaea affair.
 116. *he set up Otho to make a play for Poppaea*: So also Suet. *Otho* 3, Dio 61.11 and Tac. *Hist.* 1.13.2, whereas *Ann.* 13.45–6 makes Otho seduce Poppaea on her own account, then unwisely arouse the emperor's interest in her by praising her charms. Tacitus there agrees, however, that Otho's closeness to Nero was one of the features that Poppaea found attractive in him.
 117. *barred the door to Nero ... Otho was away*: More on Poppaea's dangerous tactics at Tac. *Ann.* 13.46. Suet. *Otho* 3 tells what seems to be a version of the same story, but makes Otho the one who excludes Nero.
 118. *killed the woman who was his own wife and sister*: That is, Octavia (nn. 79, 115), who had become Nero's 'sister' when Claudius adopted him.
 119. *Seneca was a supporter of Otho*: Not otherwise attested, but plausible.
 120. *sent him ... to govern Lusitania*: Probably in 59 CE. 'To the Ocean' carries the hint 'to the ends of the earth': Nero was getting Otho well out of the way.
 121. *he treated ... inoffensive*: 'He ruled them with integrity and uprightness', Tac. *Ann.* 13.46; 'with moderation and restraint', Suet. *Otho* 3.2. Plutarch is already phrasing it in a way that stresses not merely the merit but also the response, with its implication of possible support: that emphasis is closer to Tac. *Hist.* 1.13, Otho ruling the province 'in a friendly way'.
 122. *it was thanks to Vinus ... influence next after him*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.13 similarly stresses the 'friendship' of Vinus and Otho.

123. *Icelus and Asiaticus*: The prominence of Icelus (ch. 7 and n. 47) is also noted by Tac. *Hist.* 13.2: he is paired there with Cornelius Laco (ch. 13 and n. 71) as opposing Otho's adoption. Asiaticus was one of Vitellius's retinue, not Galba's or Otho's (*Hist.* 2.57 etc.): perhaps Plutarch has confused him with Laco, more likely he has taken over the name from a rogues' gallery of overbearing freedmen rather like that of ch. 17 (n. 95), and misapplied it here.
124. *Whenever Otho entertained Galba ... bribe ... bodyguard*: So also Tac. *Hist.* 1.24 (adding that this was done via a certain Maevius Pudens: Plutarch suppresses the complicating individual) and Suet. *Otho* 4.2.
125. *one gold piece for each man*: A gold piece = 25 silver pieces/drachmas/denarii (n. 101).
126. *his daughter*: Crispina (ch. 17 and n. 100). Tac. *Hist.* 1.13 gives this only as a rumour.
127. *50 million*: Drachmas/denarii = 200 million sesterces.
128. *declared himself and Vinius consuls*: For 69 CE.
129. *the disrespectful dismissal of Verginius Rufus*: Ch. 10.
130. *the Gauls ... punished*. Cf. n. 102. More on these rewards and punishments at Tac. *Hist.* 1.51.4, 53.3.
131. *the talk in the camp*: I.e. that of the army of Upper Germany. Similar details of their behaviour – overturning the statues, then the oath in the name of the senate and people – are given by Tac. *Hist.* 1.55.
132. *Flaccus*: Chs. 10 with n. 60, 18.
133. *'What is the matter ...', one of them asked*: Contrast Tac. *Hist.* 1.55, 'No one gave any sort of public speech or got up on a platform': Tacitus may be correcting Plutarch (so Jones, *P&R*, p. 78: cf. Intro.) or his source. (But if so Tacitus's reasoning is poor, dismissing the version of such a speech as 'there was no one from whom credit could be claimed'. That ignores the clear possibility of winning credit from Vitellius.) Direct speech is rare in Plutarch (n. 77), and it is even rarer to have such remarks in the mouth of an unnamed member of a group (cf. *Caes.* 37, *Popl.* 10). Here they mirror the speech of Antonius Honoratus at ch. 14, and like that speech they show the inflammability of the soldiers, there to do down Nymphidius, here to promote their own candidate. Some of the material overlaps with Valens's speech at *Hist.* 1.52: Valens is there trying to persuade Vitellius, while it is symptomatic that Plutarch's focus falls rather on persuading the troops (cf. Intro.).
134. *the commander of the other Germany*: I.e. Lower Germany. Tac. *Hist.* 1.55 notes that Vitellius's army too had been unenthusiastic to take the oath to Galba, though the legions were there divided among themselves.

135. *one day's journey away*: Vitellius was based at Colonia Agrippensis (modern Cologne), some 170 km from Flaccus's force at Moguntiacum (modern Mainz). That is more like a week's march, although – as the sequel makes clear, and Plutarch may well have inferred this piece of rhetoric from the story itself – a rider could cover the distance in a day.
136. *His father ... Claudius's co-ruler*: Valens's speech at Tac. *Hist.* 1.52 is very close. The father was Lucius Vitellius, consul in 34, 43 and 47, and censor in 47. Tacitus stresses his power and his early merits, but also that under Gaius and Claudius 'he changed his style to one of appalling servitude, and is held by subsequent generations to be a model of the disgrace that sycophancy brings' (*Ann.* 6.32).
137. *his poverty*: Some tales of this at Suet. *Vit.* 7. Plutarch was doubtless planning to tell some similar tales at the beginning of *Vitellius* (Intro.).
138. *Fabius Valens*: Ch. 10 and n. 59. His legion was stationed at Bonna (modern Bonn), only 30 km away.
139. *but now ... 'Caesar'*: Similarly Tac. *Hist.* 1.62 and Suet. *Vit.* 8.2: Suetonius puts this a little later, once the Upper German army has declared for Vitellius; Tacitus's placing leaves the exact historical context unclear. Nothing excludes a double acclamation as 'Germanicus', first by his own army (Plut.), then 'by everyone together' (Suet.).
140. *On hearing of the uprising there*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.12 more precisely traces where the news came from (the procurator Pompeius Propinquus, n. 109) and what it said (the legions had broken their oath, were demanding another emperor and for the sake of appearances were allowing the choice to be made by the senate and people of Rome). Plutarch understandably abbreviates.
141. *canvassing for Dolabella*: The same electoral image as at Tac. *Hist.* 1.14, Galba 'conducted an imperial election'. Dolabella was a relative of Galba (*Hist.* 1.88); for Otho's suspicions of him see *Otho* 5; he was eventually killed by Vitellius (*Hist.* 2.63–4).
142. *Piso, son of Crassus and Scribonia*: Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi Licinianus, now thirty years old. Suet. *Galb.* 17 says that he had been chosen to be Galba's private heir some time before. His father had been consul in 27 CE; his mother was the daughter of the consul of 16, and was related both to Augustus's first wife Scribonia and to Pompey. Father and mother had been executed under Claudius in 46, not as Plutarch says by Nero. Piso himself had been in exile, and Galba had recalled him. Tac. *Hist.* 1.14 says that he may now have been backed by Laco (n. 71), one of several occasions where Plutarch seems to suppress Laco's role (n.

123).

143. *a young man ... prominent characteristics*: Similarly Tac. *Hist.* 1.14, 'In appearance and dress he was old-fashioned; on a fair estimation he was severe, on a less generous view he was overgrim; and that part of his character appealed to his adopter as much as it worried those who were concerned.'
144. *Now Galba ... successor*: 10 January 69 CE. Plutarch's account shares many details with that of Tac. *Hist.* 1.17–18. Galba's journey will shortly be echoed by Otho's (ch. 24 and n. 153).
145. *without being overwhelmed ... emotion*: Similarly Tac. *Hist.* 1.17, but Tacitus has this as a reaction to Galba's private address to him; Plutarch attaches it to the performance in the camp, again reflecting his focus on the soldiers. Tacitus goes on (*Hist.* 1.19) to deal with the response in the senate, in which Plutarch has no interest.
146. *Otho's appearance ... different emotions*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.21 has similar material on Otho's reactions, but Tacitus does not have him as physically present at the declaration of the adoption: in this respect Plutarch is more vivid.
147. *Chaldaeans*: The Chaldaeans were especially revered for their prophetic skills, but by now the word had come to mean 'astrologers' more generally.
148. *Ptolemaeus*: Also mentioned by Tac. *Hist.* 1.22. He was one of 'Poppaea's astrologers', and had been a companion of Otho in Spain.
149. *Veturius ... scouts*: Veturius, Barbius and Onomastus are mentioned by Tac. *Hist.* 1.25: Tacitus makes it clearer that Onomastus was put in charge of the 'future crime' by Otho himself. Plutarch does not get his explanation of the Latin quite right: an *optio* is someone chosen to assist a centurion (Damon: 'a sort of ADC'); a *tesserarius* has the job of communicating the password. 'Messenger' is a loose translation for the second, but Plutarch has not captured *optio*. Still, Tacitus also specifies that both were *speculatores*, and that will be where Plutarch's 'scouts' (the literal translation) comes from. He may have misunderstood, as *speculatores* now functioned as a technical term for soldiers given some responsibility below a centurion, and in particular was used of those serving as an imperial bodyguard.
150. *the eighteenth before the Kalends of February*: 15 January 69 CE. 'Sixth day' is counting inclusively.
151. *On the early morning of that day Galba ...*: The rest of this chapter is closely similar to Tac. *Hist.* 1.27, with both authors retaining or adding some details of their own (e.g. in Plutarch's case the rather melodramatic detail of Otho's changing colour).

152. *a treacherous danger*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.27 has ‘an enemy within his own home’ or ‘family’.
153. *house of Tiberius*: On the north side of the Palatine. Otho’s journey mirrors Galba’s portentous walk of five days earlier (ch. 23): this one will, for the moment, be more successful.
154. *a golden column ... where all the roads through Italy terminate*: I.e. the ‘golden milestone’ (Tac. *Hist.* 1.27, Suet. *Otho* 6), from which distances were measured: it stood at the west end of the forum in front of the Temple of Saturn.
155. *no more than twenty-three*: So Tac. *Hist.* 1.27. Many details of the progress to the camp are closely similar in Plutarch and in Tacitus, showing the way that ‘this most foul deed was one that few dared, more wanted and all allowed’ (*Hist.* 1.28).
156. *Martialis ... not a conspirator himself*: Julius Martialis, trusted by Otho for a delicate commission a few weeks later (*Otho* 3 and n. 16). Tac. *Hist.* 1.28 shows that he was suspected of complicity.
157. *Piso ... at the palace*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.29–30 gives a version of his speech; Plutarch’s account is moving too quickly for that, as also for the later speech of Otho (*Hist.* 1.37–8).
158. *Illyrian legion ... Marius Celsus*: So Tac. *Hist.* 1.31. The Illyrian legion collected picked men from the Danubian legions, summoned by Nero at the outbreak of the Vindex rebellion, and still in Rome (*Hist.* 1.6). Their quarters in the Vipsanian Portico were some way away, on the edge of the Campus Martius. Marius Celsus was consul designate (*Hist.* 1.45), and remained loyal to Galba to the last (see ch. 27). The Illyrian legion was not impressed: ‘their representatives forced Celsus back at spear-point’ (*Hist.* 1.31).
159. *Vinius ... Laco said he should*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.32–3 has this debate, but mentions Laco and Icelus (n. 47) rather than Celsus. Plutarch may be mistaken, as we would have assumed Celsus was away trying to cope with the Illyrian legion (previous n., cf. *Hist.* 1.39); or perhaps we should emend ‘Celsus’ to ‘Icelus’ here (so Little–Ehrhardt).
160. *Julius Atticus*: A *speculator* (n. 149), also mentioned by Tac. *Hist.* 1.35.
161. *the enemy of Caesar*: Cf. *Otho* 3 and 5 with nn. 14 and 29.
162. *‘Who gave the order?’ ... applauded*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.35 tells of Galba’s rebuke, but does not have the response of the crowd: Plutarch’s emphasis reflects his favoured theme of collective forces (Intro.).
163. *as if it were on a stormy sea*: The same image at Tac. *Hist.* 1.40, ‘Galba was driven in one direction and another under the pressure of the waves of the crowd.’
164. *Basilica of Paulus*: Just to the north-east of the forum (cf. *Caes.*

29).

165. *'Make way, private citizen!'*: Elegantly ambiguous: perhaps they are telling the crowd to clear the way, perhaps they are addressing Galba himself and informing him that his days of rule are over.
166. *as if ... watch the show*: The image goes back to the shared source (see Intro. and n. 15 there), though Tacitus initially relates it to the crowd's shouts for the blood of Otho and the conspirators 'as if they were making demands at some circus or theatre entertainment' (*Hist.* 1.32); then there is the same idea of a spectacle at *Hist.* 1.40.1.
167. *Atilius Vercilio*: A standard-bearer (*Tac. Hist.* 1.41). The spelling of the name is uncertain.
168. *on whom the sun looked that day*: A version of another image drawn from the common source (Intro. and n. 15 there): Tacitus has 'there was one man whom on that day our generation saw behaving with signal glory'.
169. *Sempronius Densus ... in front of the carriage*: *Tac. Hist.* 1.43 also praises Densus, but makes his act of heroism one in defence of Piso rather than Galba. Dio 64.6.5 agrees with Plutarch. Tacitus is likely to be right, but in this account rich in variants (cf. e.g. ch. 27 on the name of the killer) it may well be that the common source (Intro. and n. 15 there) noted both versions.
170. *Lacus Curtius*: So *Tac. Hist.* 1.41. The Lacus Curtius was in the middle of the forum and was associated with various deeds of the highest antiquity, esp. the death of Mettius Curtius when fighting against Romulus (*Rom.* 18) and/or the city-saving self-sacrifice of Marcus Curtius in 362 (Livy 7.6, where S. Oakley has a long note in his commentary (1998)). The desecration of so ancient a spot is strongly felt.
171. *'Do it ... for the people of Rome'*: Given by *Tac. Hist.* 1.41 as the most usual version, but he also notes an alternative version that Galba asked what harm he had done (so also Dio 64.6.5), and begged a few days to pay the donative. A further alternative is added by Suet. *Galb.* 20 ('What are you doing, my fellow-soldiers? I am yours and you are mine'). As Tacitus adds, 'It made no difference to the killers what he said.'
172. *Camurius ... Fabius Fabullus*: The first three are mentioned as possibilities by *Tac. Hist.* 1.41; he also notes that Camurius is the best attested. Fabius Fabullus is presumably the 'common soldier' of Suet. *Galb.* 20 who picks up the head and gets a handhold by a thumb in the mouth.
173. *He*: It is not clear from the Greek whether this 'he' is the killer, whichever of the four it may have been, or Fabius Fabullus, whether or not he was the killer: Suet. *Galb.* 20 may suggest the

second (see previous n.).

174. *in the way that bacchants do*: This hints at the scene in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the head of Pentheus is borne by his deluded mother Agave: that episode is explicitly evoked in another gruesome scene with a severed head (*Crass.* 33). Notice that here it is the 'face' of Galba that is carried around; we would expect 'head' once again, but 'face' is the word (*prosopon*) also used of a theatrical mask or character.
175. *killed by a certain Murcus near the Temple of Vesta*: So Tac. *Hist.* 1.43: this was Statius Murcus, a *speculator* (n. 149). Plutarch simplifies the movements of Piso: after going to the palace guard (ch. 25) he had also been sent to the praetorian camp (*Hist.* 1.34), then had rejoined Galba (1.39) and had finally taken refuge in the temple but was dragged out and killed on the steps by Murcus and a certain Sulpicius Florus. 'They say that no other death made Otho so delighted, and that he gazed on no other head with so insatiable a gaze' (*Hist.* 1.44) – an item to Otho's discredit that Plutarch has presumably suppressed.
176. *he made it clear ... contrary to Otho's wishes*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.42 notes the alternative possibility (though is disinclined to believe it) that Vinus was not complicit and improvised his plea on the spur of the moment.
177. *Laco's*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.46 (in a difficult passage: cf. Damon's n.) seems to suggest that Otho had ordered the execution, though there was also some talk of spiriting Laco away to an island (possibly the same sort of pretence as he uses with Marius Celsus at the end of this ch.). Plutarch is again thin on Laco (nn. 71, 123, 142).
178. *As Archilochus puts it*: This is fr. 101 W., known only from this quotation.
179. *120 people ... executed*: So Tac. *Hist.* 1.44, explaining that this was 'not done to honour Galba, but according to traditional imperial precedent for self-defence in the present and vengeance in the future'.
180. *Marius Celsus ... to help Galba*: See ch. 25 and n. 158. The pressure for his execution and Otho's ploy to save him are recounted similarly by Tac. *Hist.* 1.45.
181. *as if they were different men completely*: 'You would have believed it a different senate and a different people' (Tac. *Hist.* 1.45).
182. *new gods in Heaven*: That is, it was as if they were swearing by new gods who would not mind how the previous oaths had been neglected.
183. *to his daughter for 2,500 drachmas*: I.e. to Crispina (n. 100). Tac. *Hist.* 1.47 does not mention the sum.

184. *Piso's was given to his wife Verania*: And also to his brother Scribonianus, according to Tac. *Hist.* 1.47.
185. *the slaves of Patrobius and Tigellinus*: The text of 'and Tigellinus' is not secure. For Patrobius see ch. 17 and n. 95: Suet. *Galb.* 20 says that the freedman Neronianus paid a hundred pieces of gold and threw it down where Patrobius was executed; Tac. *Hist.* 1.49 says that the mutilation took place 'in front of Patrobius's tomb'.
186. *Sessorium*: The reading is uncertain: if correct, it refers to a location in the south-east of Rome, beyond the Esquiline, where a late commentary on Horace says paupers were buried.
187. *Helvidius Priscus ... Argius*: Helvidius Priscus was the son-in-law of Thrasea Paetus (*Cato* 25 and n. 112, Intro. *Cato*), and like him a philosophical thorn in several imperial sides: exiled under Nero, he returned under Galba, initially supported but soon criticized Vespasian, and was exiled again in 75 CE and later executed. Tacitus does not mention his role here and Plutarch perhaps heard of it from a Roman friend (General Intro. III). Tacitus does mention Argius (*Hist.* 1.49.1), and so does Suetonius (*Galb.* 20), adding that the head was buried with the rest of the body in Galba's private gardens on the Via Aurelia.
188. *others were not so regarded by themselves*: Plutarch is thinking of Verginius Rufus (ch. 6 and n. 38).
189. *Scipio ... and Camillus*: A saints' gallery of traditional Roman heroes: there are similar lists at *On the Fortune of the Romans* 317d, *Comp Aristides-Cato* 1, *Caes.* 15. Scipio is presumably Scipio Africanus, the victor of Hannibal. Fabricius figures prominently in *Pyrrhus*, and was renowned for his high principle, austerity and incorruptibility. Camillus is the general of the early fourth century CE, conqueror of Veii and defender of Rome against the Gauls and the subject of a Plutarch Life. For the nostalgia cf. Pelling, *P&H*, pp. 224, 235 n. 123.
190. *the story of Galba ... many to pity his death*: This shares some features with, but has much less bite than, Tacitus's famous summary at *Hist.* 1.49 (cf. Intro.).

Notes to Otho

1. *The next day dawned*: 16 January 69 CE. Tacitus mentions a visit of Otho to the Capitol on the previous night (*Hist.* 1.47); perhaps he appeared there twice, perhaps Plutarch has displaced the item to open *Otho* in one of the most standard of ways, with a new day.
2. *Marius Celsus*: See *Galb.* 25 and n. 158, 27 and, for the present scene, Tac. *Hist.* 1.71.

3. *Then Otho delivered a speech*: In the rest of the chapter Plutarch gathers items from various contexts in Otho's first days as emperor (Tac. *Hist.* 1.71, 77, 90). For the moment they give an unexpectedly good impression of Otho, though ch. 4 adds a hint that expediency played a large part. Tacitus is more acid (cf. e.g. *Hist.* 1.77), in the context of the consulships, 'some measures were in keeping with the state's dignity, but many were improperly hurried through in the interest of immediate expediency', and cf. nn. 5, 8.
4. *confirmed ... by Nero and Galba*: A simplification of a complicated set of arrangements, spelled out more fully at Tac. *Hist.* 1.77 (for the details see G. B. Townend, *American Journal of Philology* 83 (1962), 113–29). Otho took over the consulship held by Galba, but promised to stand down on 1 March to allow Verginius the month of March. All men designated consuls by Nero and Galba indeed had their offices confirmed, but not necessarily for the periods originally specified.
5. *it was as if ... empire*: See Intro. Tacitus makes his spectators more cynical. They see through the dissimulation, and feel 'all the more fear at the counterfeit virtues and the vices that would return' (*Hist.* 1.71). This reference to a 'fury of punishment or spirit of revenge' is likely to be Plutarch's own conception (for similar remarks elsewhere cf. S. Swain, *American Journal of Philology* 110 (1989), 272–302).
6. *fate of Tigellinus*: See *Galb.* 2 and n. 12, and esp. *Galb.* 17. Tac. *Hist.* 1.72 agrees on the general delight at Tigellinus's death, though he puts more weight on the popular demonstrations in bringing it about, and his Otho is more of a passive figure (as he is elsewhere: nn. 19, 26). Plutarch's prim moralism (contrast the usual style of the *Parallel Lives*) – the wise judges who found Tigellinus's sexual cavortings the worst form of punishment – is also alien to Tacitus's more worldly manner.
7. *Sinoessa*: Modern Terme di San Rocco, in Campania.
8. *no personal vindictiveness against anyone*: Tacitus is again more pointed: 'Perhaps he had laid his personal grudges aside, perhaps he was storing them up. The shortness of his reign made it impossible to tell' (*Hist.* 1.47).
9. *Cluvius Rufus adds ... 'Otho'*: Tac. *Hist.* 1.78 has the Nero acclamations but not the more telling 'diploma' item (for these 'diplomas' see *Galb.* 8 and n. 51) which Plutarch ascribes to Cluvius Rufus (see Intro.). Possibly Tacitus had not (yet) read Cluvius; possibly Tacitus has his own reasons for omitting the item (cf. Intro.).
10. *the most prominent and influential people*: Echoing the end of ch. 1,

where these ‘prominent and influential people’ judged Otho so generously. They are beginning to feel doubts, but it is to his credit that they can still influence him.

11. *the mercenaries*: Oddly so described: the trouble comes from regular soldiers, the praetorians. The phrase may be echoing Plutarch’s recurrent emphasis on their buyability, and picking up the very first sentence of *Galb.* (Intro.).
12. *Crispinus*: Valerius Crispinus, military tribune of the praetorians.
13. *the seventeenth cohort from Ostia*: This is the seventeenth urban cohort, perhaps the one which Claudius stationed at Ostia for firefighting (Suet. *Divus Claudius* 25.2). Tac. *Hist.* 1.80–84 gives an extended and largely similar account of this episode, which evidently featured prominently in the shared source (see Intro. and n. 15 there). Suet. *Otho* 8.2 has a slightly different version. Plutarch need not imply that the trouble started in Ostia; it seems more likely that Crispinus was preparing to leave *for* Ostia from the praetorian camp just outside Rome, and that was where the trouble began.
14. *not ... for Caesar but against Caesar*: As usual it is soldiers who dwell on the name ‘Caesar’: cf. ‘Caesar’s aid’ and ‘Caesar’s enemies’ (twice) later in the chapter. The name still carried military resonance and inspired loyalty (cf. *Galb.* 26; *Otho* 5 and n. 29).
15. *He was fearful for his guests, they were fearful of him*: The striking formulation goes back to the common source (see Intro. and n. 15 there): cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.81, ‘Otho was fearful and was feared, as tends to happen once minds have turned to suspicion.’
16. *his commanders*: The tribune Julius Martialis (*Galb.* 25 and n. 156) and the legionary prefect Vitellius Saturninus. Both men were wounded (Tac. *Hist.* 1.82).
17. *an elaborate speech ... breaking into tears*: Tacitus has an elaborate version of Otho’s speech at *Hist.* 1.83–4, but such extended direct speech was not in Plutarch’s manner (*Ti. Gracch.* 9 and n. 44). Tacitus’s Otho has resonant praise of the senate; Plutarch ignores this, concentrating rather on the stratagem for bringing the difficult mob over to his side. That suits his emphasis on wild collective forces (Intro.).
18. *1,250 drachmas*: On the levels that donatives had reached cf. *Galb.* 2 and n. 15.
19. *It was now up to them ... punishing them*: In Tacitus the suggestion of picking on a few ringleaders comes from the men themselves (1.82), and his Otho is again (n. 6) more passive than Plutarch’s.
20. *For firm news ... Judaea*: Plutarch here picks up the Vitellian strand from the point he left it at *Galb.* 22. He rapidly summarizes

the complicated material given at Tac. *Hist.* 1.51–76: notice esp. ch. 76, Otho's good news from the Danube armies of Dalmatia, Pannonia and Moesia, and from Vespasian in Judaea and Mucianus in Syria.

21. *All of this encouraged Otho to write to Vitellius*: But Tac. *Hist.* 1.74 has Otho write to Vitellius *before* receiving the news from the Danube and eastern armies, and that must be right (Murison, *Galba*, p. 83). It is probably Plutarch himself who has done the displacing, in order to collect all the news from the provinces together, both good and bad.
22. *omens and apparitions ... open intervention*: Plutarch here selects the most striking omens from a longer list preserved at Tac. *Hist.* 1.86, but Tacitus does not date the turning of Julius Caesar's statue so precisely, and Suet. *Divus Vespasianus* 5.7 puts it before the end of 68 CE. The dating may be Plutarch's own elaboration, a rather pedestrian way of bringing out the omen's significance.
23. *Caecina and Valens ... holding the Alps*: Overstated: A. Caecina Alienus (legionary legate in Germany, then suffect consul 69 CE) had reached the Alps, but Fabius Valens (*Galb.* 10 and n. 59, 15 and n. 87, 22 and n. 138; *Otho* n. 35) was still north of them.
24. *Dolabella ... plotting rebellion*: He had been a candidate for the succession to Galba (*Galb.* 23 and n. 141). Tac. *Hist.* 1.88 briefly mentions the present episode and 2.63–4 tells of his execution by Vitellius. On 'mercenaries' cf. n. 11.
25. *Aquinum*: Modern Aquino, some 110 km south-east of Rome.
26. *Otho turned to selecting the magistrates ... brother of Vespasian*: Plutarch again gathers together items which occurred at different times. L. Vitellius's appointment belongs here (Tac. *Hist.* 1.88); this concern for Vitellius's family also presumably extends over this period (cf. *Hist.* 1.75, with an emphasis less favourable to Otho); but Flavius Sabinus's appointment was earlier, just after Galba's fall. So *Hist.* 1.46, with a similar comment on possible motives, 'following the judgement of Nero, under whom Sabinus had risen to that position, but with many having an eye to his brother Vespasian': but in Tacitus these are the motives of the soldiers, who at that point are directing everything, and his Otho is again (nn. 6, 19) more passive.
27. *Brixillum*: Modern Brescello, about 90 km north-west of Bologna and 30 km south of Bedriacum. Tacitus does not mention this, but at *Hist.* 2.33 he makes Otho move there after the battle of Castores. Perhaps Plutarch puts the move too early, perhaps Tacitus delays mention of the town for dramatic reasons (cf. Ash, *Hist.* n).
28. *Marius Celsus ... Spurinna*: For Marius Celsus see ch. 1 and *Galb.*

25, 27, and n. 158; C. Suetonius Paulinus had already held two consulships, the second in 66 CE, and had been governor of Britain in 60; Appius Annius Gallus had been consul in the mid 60s, and later became legate in Upper Germany to deal with Julius Civilis in 70; T. Vestricius Spurinna was probably still of praetorian standing, and lived on till the end of the century.

29. *sabotaging all Caesar's ... interests*: Notice the name 'Caesar' again, here and in the next sentence (n. 14). Tac. *Hist.* 2.18 has less detail, but makes the circumstances clearer. This was in the early stages of the siege of Placentia. The men first insisted on building fortifications forward of the city, overriding the more cautious Spurinna, but the hard work led them to think better of it. Plutarch welcomes the emphasis on the troops' insubordination and their distaste for labour, but he obscures the fact that Spurinna was trying to *countermand* unnecessary and hazardous fortification work, not force them into labouring.
30. *a soldiers' slanging match at Placentia*: Plutarch simplifies by omitting the complicated preliminaries of the siege of Placentia (Tac. *Hist.* 2.18–21).
31. *'You and your theatres ... real men'*: This exchange is more elaborate than its equivalent at *Hist.* 2.21–2, as Plutarch dwells on the inflammability of the ordinary soldier (not very plausibly: Martin, *Tacitus*, pp. 193–4). In contrast he is more restrained than Tacitus in describing the carnage itself.
32. *Otho's generals ... Vitellian counterparts*: The generalization stresses Otho's new-found restraint, but neglects important facts: Tac. *Hist.* 2.12–13 details some Othonian outrages in N. Italy. Plutarch's hostility to Vitellius is then continued in his account of Caecina's outlandishness (next n.).
33. *Caecina ... Roman officials*: This is closely similar to Tac. *Hist.* 2.20, but Tacitus is more equivocal: he contrasts Caecina's strange personal appearance with the restraint the army showed in Italy, and makes the aversion to Caecina as much a commentary on the malicious critics as on Caecina himself. The stress on the restraint of Caecina's march was probably mentioned by the shared source (see Intro. and n. 15 there) and suppressed by Plutarch. Tacitus does not have the 'vast bulk' (a further way of assimilating Caecina to the large northerners he has spent too long among, cf. Ash on *Hist.* 2.20.1) or the habit of giving orders by imperious hand-gestures: on this last feature some have suspected Plutarch's text, but it is more likely that it accurately conveys what was in the shared source and that Tacitus is toning it down.
34. *His wife*: Salonina (Tac. *Hist.* 2.20).
35. *Fabius Valens ... late for the first battle*: On Valens see *Galb.* 10 and

- n. 59. His avarice and extortions are stressed by Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.52 and esp. ch. 66, noticing the slowness of the march; then 2.29–30, and nn. 39–40). Tacitus airs Plutarch's alternative explanation, that Caecina brought on battle prematurely to exclude Valens from a share in any glory (*Hist.* 2.24), but relates this to the battle of Castores (ch. 7), not the siege of Placentia.
36. *Caecina ... Annius Gallus*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.22–3 gives similar versions of the marches of Caecina and Gallus (n. 28).
37. *pitched camp close to the enemy*: At Bedriacum, scene of the decisive battle. Tacitus notes that Gallus's army too was close to mutiny (*Hist.* 2.23); Plutarch prefers to leave his picture of sedition more sharply focused on Spurius's force.
38. *He then gave orders ... ambush*: This is the battle of Castores (c. 5 April 69 CE: Murison, *Galba*, p. 95) on the road between Cremona and Bedriacum, described more fully at Tac. *Hist.* 2.24–6.
39. *Paulinus was late ... in arriving*: A mistake: Paulinus commanded the infantry on the battlefield (Tac. *Hist.* 2.24–5), and the criticism centred on his slowness to sound the attack and then his swiftness to call it off (2.25–6).
40. *later criticized ... past reputation*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.23 puts the first charges of cowardice before the battle, though he also emphasizes the criticisms of Paulinus's caution in the field (previous n.). Plutarch's presentation produces some mirroring of the Vitellians' charges against Valens (ch. 6 and n. 35), though the alleged reasons for Valens's delay were even less respectable (n. 43).
41. *Titianus ... Proculus*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.23 (cf. Ash) makes Otho summon Titianus earlier, though he does not arrive until after Castores, and that seems right: there would not be time for news to reach Rome and for Titianus to be sent out in time for the council of war of ch. 8 (Martin, *Tacitus*, p. 192). Otho's brother L. Salvius Otho Titianus had been consul in 54 CE and proconsul of Asia in 63–4; Licinius Proculus was prominent under Otho as praetorian prefect, but we know nothing of his previous career. Tacitus 'gives the impression that friendship with Otho was his only recommendation for the job' (Damon on *Hist.* 1.46.1).
42. *Proculus ... in command*: So also Tac. *Hist.* 2.39, closely similar.
43. *similar disturbances ... army of Valens*: Cf. ch. 6 and n. 35, but here the emphasis falls on the insubordination. The juxtaposition with the criticisms of Paulinus (n. 40) accentuates the similarities between the two sides. Tac. *Hist.* 2.27–30 gives a fuller account of the rising against Valens: its first stages developed when Valens sent away some Batavian auxiliaries, and the troops grew suspicious. That would complicate Plutarch's picture of the mirroring disturbances on both sides, and he cuts it away.

44. *Otho now arrived at ... Bedriacum ... council of war*: About 10 April 69 CE (Murison, *Galba*, pp. 106–7). Tac. *Hist.* 2.31–2 gives an account of the debate that follows. He first gives a more elaborate version of Paulinus’s arguments, then treats those of Proculus very briefly, limiting them to a naive conviction that the gods are on Otho’s side. Tacitus, like Suetonius (*Otho* 9.1), leaves no doubt that Paulinus had the better case (doubtless over-biasing the presentation in that direction). Plutarch’s version leans the same way, but the issue is here less clear-cut.
45. *another force from Moesia and Pannonia*: Cf. ch. 15 and n. 76. It is not quite certain what troops are meant: probably only the fourteenth legion, together with detachments from other legions (Tac. *Hist.* 2.32, with Ash’s n.: some of those troops arrived in time for the battle, others only just missed it, 2.54.1).
46. *so-called praetorians ... some real campaigning instead*: On the praetorians see *Galb.* 2 and n. 14. For the theme of their soft life at Rome cf. chs. 5–6.
47. *That is the version given by the orator Secundus*: For Secundus see Intro. ‘That’ is probably just the allegation of Otho’s failure of nerve, a view also hinted at by Suet. *Otho* 9.1 (‘impatient of prolonging his worries’) and Tac. *Hist.* 2.40 (‘pained by the delay and impatient to achieve his hopes’).
48. *considerable pressure in the two armies ... the choice of an emperor*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.37 mentions ‘some authors’ who mention a move of the troops to confer and pick an emperor, and suggest that this was one reason for the Othonians’ delay, with Paulinus felt to be a particularly strong candidate. But, whereas Plutarch finds this ‘not implausible’, Tacitus trenchantly derides this version as unworldly (see Intro.). Plutarch subtracts Tacitus’s specific reference to Paulinus, who has cut too poor a figure in the earlier narrative to be an attractive alternative to Otho and Vitellius.
49. *The soldiers with the highest quality, experience and sense might well begin to reflect*: For such reflections of well-informed observers cf. *Pomp.* 70, the similar sombre thoughts of onlookers and participants before Pharsalus (see Intro.). For a happier equivalent, cf. *Flam.* 11, the delighted thoughts of the liberated Greeks.
50. *Such things ... Otho’s decadence or excess?* Tacitus puts similar but more pointed reflections in the mouths of the Roman public at *Hist.* 1.50 (cf. Intro. and Ash on 2.37–8).
51. *Brixillum*: See n. 27.
52. *another mistake ... cutting off his own spearhead*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.33 similarly criticizes this decision, adding that morale suffered through Otho’s departure because the troops trusted only him just

as he trusted only the troops; he had also left some uncertainty of command-structure among his generals.

53. *Caecina ... force a crossing*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.34–5 suggests that Caecina's attempt to cross was a ruse. He has more detail on the fight between the Germans and Otho's gladiators, but ignores the fiasco of the fireships: perhaps Plutarch takes this from the common source (see Intro. and n. 15 there), perhaps he adds it from an alternative (possibly oral) tradition.
54. *50 stades*: About 6 miles. Tac. *Hist.* 2.39 says they reached 4 miles from Bedriacum, but goes on to give a similar description of the water shortage.
55. *advance against the enemy ... Paulinus objected*: So Tac. *Hist.* 2.40, who gives the distance as 16 miles (about 120–30 stades). He makes both Celsus and Paulinus object to the risk of exposing a tired marching line. Plutarch's Greek could mean either 'Paulinus' or 'Paulinus and his followers' or 'associates', and he too may have Celsus in mind.
56. *horseman ... so-called Numidians*: A technical term for a dispatch rider (cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.40).
57. *they sent ... advance force*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.41 is here closely similar. Thus begins the battle of Bedriacum, 14 April 69 CE.
58. *For some reason ... come over to them*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.42 notes the possibility that the rumour had been spread deliberately, either by Vitellius's scouts or by some deception among Otho's forces. The rest of his account is close to Plutarch's, including a similarly coloured description of the Othonian confusion.
59. *Vitellius's 'Ravager' and Otho's 'Helper'*: I.e. Vitellius's XXI Rapax and Otho's I Adiutrix (Tac. *Hist.* 2.43 is very similar).
60. *this was their first experience of ... battle*: Overstated: they had fought at Castores (Ash on *Hist.* 2.43.1).
61. *the legionary commander Orfidius*: Orfidius Benignus, mentioned also at Tac. *Hist.* 2.43 and 45.
62. *Alfenus Varus led the so-called Batavians against them*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.43 does not explain why the Batavians were sent against the gladiators: this may be drawn from a source or may be Plutarch's own guess, informed by his knowledge of the Batavians from earlier parts of the story (e.g. the events described at Tac. *Hist.* 2.27, see n. 43). Tacitus's account of this fighting is different, with the Batavians cutting down the gladiators in the river as they try to land. Alfenus Varus later became Vitellius's praetorian prefect.
63. *The worst performance ... praetorians*: Tacitus does not note the praetorians' shameful performance, though he does mention their later complaints of betrayal (*Hist.* 2.44). Their failure is fittingly

stressed by Plutarch, the nadir of a story in which their greed and overconfidence play so large a part.

64. *soldiers ... blame their generals for everything*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.44 has Paulinus and Proculus avoiding the camp, and the soldiers venting their disappointment by blaming a legionary commander, Vedius Aquila; Plutarch cuts away the complicating individual Aquila.
65. *they had actually defeated the enemy*: Tacitus makes Annius plead for the troops to act together (*Hist.* 2.44), but does not dwell on these weak points of consolation. These are perhaps partly borrowed from the praetorians' protestations, recounted by Tacitus later in the same chapter (n. 63).
66. *Marius Celsus ... the public interest*: Plutarch is much fuller than Tacitus on Celsus's role and on the peace negotiations. In Plutarch the material continues the pressure for a peaceful solution which he has earlier stressed (ch. 9): a historical example from the late Republic is effective now (reflections on Cato and Scipio), just as the troops had found the same war thought-provoking in ch. 9. Tacitus had been dismissive on the earlier occasion (n. 48), and finds the theme less appealing now.
67. *not even Otho ... further trial of fortune*: Celsus does not sound confident of Otho; but Otho's own resonant speech (ch. 15) will echo Celsus's words, and prove that he is a 'man of quality' indeed.
68. *remember Cato and Scipio ... after Pharsalus*: Cato 55–73.
69. *the battle of the ambush*: I.e. Castores, ch. 7.
70. *Titianus began to regret having sent the delegation*: He may have been influenced by a suspicious delay in the envoys' return (Tac. *Hist.* 2.45).
71. *Mestrius Florus ... showed me an ancient temple*: For L. Mestrius Florus and Plutarch's visit to the battlefield see Intro. and General Intro. I.
72. *no way of turning prisoners to profit*: Because they cannot be sold as slaves, as Tac. *Hist.* 2.44.1 makes plain. Tacitus makes that comment when describing the Othonian flight to Bedriacum (end of ch. 12): he is explaining that the congestion caused by the corpses made it too difficult. Plutarch has probably borrowed it from that context in the common source (see Intro. and n. 15 there).
73. *the wounded ... accounts of what had happened*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.46 similarly dwells on the encouragement offered Otho by his men, but has different details. The scene here has something in common with *Ant.* 43–4.
74. *hailed him as Emperor*: In two senses, acclaiming him as still their

‘emperor’ but also, in a way that goes back to the Republic, giving him the salutation appropriate to a *victorious* general (cf. *Ant.* 43 and n. 231).

75. *a common soldier ... killed himself*: Suet. *Otho* 10.1 tells a story (on the authority of his father, who served in the war) of a common soldier who brought news of the defeat, was believed by no one and charged with cowardice and fell on his sword at Otho’s feet: Otho cried out that he would not further endanger such brave men. Dio 64.11 has the same tale of a cavalryman. Plutarch adapts it to make it a symbol of everyone’s loyalty, not a response to comrades’ imputations of deceit and cowardice.
76. *our army from Moesia ... the Adriatic*: See ch. 8 and n. 45. Tac. *Hist.* 2.46 makes these thoughts of the approaching army part of the encouragement offered by Otho’s troops and by the praetorian prefect Plotius Firmus. Plotius is again given a role in Otho’s death-scene at *Hist.* 2.46, 49 (see also ch. 18 and n. 92). Plutarch prefers to suppress the complicating Plotius for the moment, and leave the final scenes as a confrontation between the single individual Otho and the various devoted groups whose mentality, in their less creditable moments, he has highlighted throughout.
77. *Asia ... are on our side*: This harks back to the messages received by Vespasian and Mucianus in ch. 4 (n. 20); but Plutarch’s narrative in *Vitellius* would have gone on to point the irony of Otho’s conviction here (Intro.).
78. *Hannibal ... Cimbri*: The muster of Rome’s greatest foreign enemies, Pyrrhus in 280–275 BCE, Hannibal in 218–201, the Cimbri in 105–101.
79. *This day ... day again*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.47 gives Otho a speech of similar resonance and resolve, but there is little overlap in detail, and Tacitus’s version puts more weight on Otho’s concern with the judgement of posterity. Both authors may have elaborated independently the material in the shared source (see Intro. and n. 15 there): for the way this fits the themes of the closing chapters cf. Intro.
80. *further words ... those who were not*: The text of the Greek is here defective. For Otho’s final arrangements cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.48.
81. *his nephew Cocceius*: In fact Salvius Cocceianus. Possibly we should emend Plutarch’s text to ‘Cocceianus’.
82. *adopt ... delay the adoption*: Plutarch is the only source to mention these adoption plans. The fate of Piso (*Galb.* 23, 27) will be in his, and his readers’, minds; but there may also be a theme here that will be picked up in *Vitellius*, where the charismatic Titus, Vespasian’s son and heir, will play an important role – and, as Plutarch’s audience would know, survive to become emperor

himself.

83. *never wholly to forget, and never to remember too well*: Another striking formulation drawn from the shared source (see Intro. and n. 15 there): 'He should never forget that Otho was his uncle, and never remember it too well' (Tac. *Hist.* 2.48). But he did remember it too well: Domitian executed him for celebrating his uncle's birthday (Suet. *Domitianus* 10.3).
84. *soldiers were threatening ... rather than desert their emperor*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.49 talks of particular violence aimed against Verginius; Plutarch prefers to hold Verginius back to ch. 18.
85. *It was already evening*: 15 April 69 CE, with Otho's death following early the next morning on 16th. Tacitus gives a similar but terser version of the death-scene and the consequent grief and suicides (*Hist.* 2.49); so does Suetonius (*Otho* 11–12. The scene has much in common with the death of Cato (*Cato* 68–70), which was often recalled during the early principate and may well have been in Otho's mind as a model. For a good analysis of Tacitus's death-scene see G. O. Hutchinson, *Latin Literature from Seneca to Juvenal* (1993), pp. 257–61.
86. *took out the body under arms*: Tac. *Hist.* 2.49 and Suet. *Otho* 11.2 suggest that Otho himself had given instructions for a swift burial, to avoid his body falling into Vitellius's hands. Plutarch prefers to continue his theme of the devoted soldiers, thoughtfully providing for their emperor. Cf. the similar themes of the devoted *people* attending to their dead heroes at *Ti. Gracch.* 21, *C. Gracch.* 18 and *Caes.* 67–8.
87. *Those who seized the chance of acting as pallbearers*: Praetorians (Tac. *Hist.* 2.49).
88. *some fell to the ground in worship at a distance*: A day before, they had fallen before the living Otho with similar gestures (ch. 15); they now show a similar devotion in death.
89. *this yearning*: 'Yearning', like 'lust' in the previous sentence, is usually found in erotic contexts; this devotion is indeed intense, like that felt for Mark Antony by his troops (*Ant.* 68). Otho's career began in the erotic atmosphere of Poppaea and Nero; the same themes recur in this more dignified way at his end.
90. *When I was in Brixillum ... 'Inscribed as a marker of Marcus Otho'*: For this visit see Intro. The Greek for 'inscribed to the memory' is peculiar, and (unless the text is corrupt) Plutarch may have struggled with the Latin. Vitellius commented that the memorial was worthy of Otho: Suet. *Vit.* 10.3 interpreted this as arrogant bad taste.
91. *thirty-seven years old when he died*: In fact a little less: he was born on 28 April 32 CE (Suet. *Otho* 2.1) and died on 16 April 69:

‘thirty-seven years less eleven days’, Dio 64.15, perhaps on the assumption that the thirty-seventh year would finish on 27 April.

92. *Plotius*: The manuscripts have ‘Pollio’, but the two co-prefects were in fact Plotius Firmus (n. 76) and Proculus (n. 41). Plotius had behaved with dignity at Otho’s end (Tac. *Hist.* 46, 49), and Flacelière–Chambry in the 1979 Budé edition and Little–Ehrhardt are probably right to restore his name here.
93. *refused before ... from a victorious one*: *Galb.* 6, 10. Tac. *Hist.* 2.51 mentions the approach to Verginius; Plutarch is fuller than Tacitus on his reasons for refusal now, though it is very likely that he has reconstructed these himself.
94. *So he stole away by some other door*: A furtive departure, ending a Life which began with an impressive imperial entrance.